FIFTEENE
SERMONS
VPON THE SONG OF SALOMON.

Written by George Gyffard, *Preacher of the Word at Maulden in Eſſex.*

AT LONDON
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EIGHTEEN

SERMONS

UPON THE SONG

OF SALOMON.

TO THE RIGHT HONORAble, and his very good Lord, *Robert Deuereux*, Earle of Essex and Ewe, Vicount Hereford and Bourgcher, Lord Ferrers of Chartly, Bourgcher and Louaine, Knight of the honorable Order of the Garter, Maister of the Horse, Generall of her Maiesties Ordinance and Munition, one of her most honorable priuie Councell, and Earle Marshall of England.

G Gyfford wisheth increase of all true honour in this life, and eternall felicitie in the life to come.

Esus Christ, the King of Kings, betrothed himselfe to his Church of old time: shee is become his spouse whom hee loueth deerely. The marriage shall be at the generall iudgement in the end of this world, when it shall be solemnized with great ioy and triumph, as it is written: I heard as the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of strong thundrings, saying, Hallelu-iah: for our Lord God almighty hath raigned. Let vs be glad and reioyce, and giue glory to him: for the marriage of the Lambe is come, and his wife hath made her selfe

ready. *Reuel. 19. verſ. 6. 7. In the meane time, while ſhee is a pilgrime heere vpon earth, there is (according to the ancient maner) a Loue-ſong betweene them, which king Salomon framed and penned, not guided by humane wiſedome, but by the inſpiration of the heauenly ſpirit. As it is a ſong betweene the two chiefe ſtates, the higheſt Lord and the greateſt Lady: ſo doth it containe the greateſt myſteries, the moſt ſweet and comfortable doctrine, and is therefore worthily named the Song of Songs. In it this Bridegroome and his Bride doe highly extoll and praiſe each other. To ſet forth his excellent dignitie, his riches and glory, with all thoſe ſweet things that flow vnto her from him, ſhe doth bring in al the ſtatelieſt, the richeſt, the goodlieſt, and the ſweeteſt things vnder heauen. The like doth hee in praiſing her beauty, and her delectable ſweetnes. From hence doth ſpring the great delight and pleaſure, which the one taketh in the other, where they doe (as it were) vnfold the vehement paſsions of their loue, with that feruent deſire which he hath to be moſt neerely ioyned vnto him, & to dwel with him for euer. Alſo there doe many goodly tokens paſſe between*

them:

them: for he bestoweth vpon her very rich iewels and heauenly ornaments to decke and to beautifie her withall: and she againe rendreth vnto him the sweet fruits of her loue. Moreouer her frailties, her imperfections, and her vnkind dealing at sometimes towards her welbeloued are not omitted, nor the sore afflictions, which by that occasion she doth endure. And finding that his loue is most stedfast, nothing altred nor diminished by her frailty and vndutifulnes towards him, she is the more enflamed to seeke after him, and to craue his presence and protection, while she is heere below in the midst of so many cruell enemies. Many other speciall things there be which I doe heere omit. I doe offer this booke vnto your Lordship, not that I esteeme my slender labours in expounding it, worthy to come into your honourable hands: but for the excellent worthinesse of the matters therein contained. The Princes and Nobles of the earth are delighted to heare of matters which are stately, magnificall and of great glory: because great things do become great ones. Here are the greatest of all. The Kings and Emperours of this world, especially in their chiefe solemnities,

as in the dayes of their Coronation, or at the marriage of their sonnes and daughters, doe shew a greater glory in riches and delicate pleasure: but if we compare them with the glory, the riches and pleasure of this Bridegroom and his Bride, they shall be found to be but beggarly trash. For what are earthly, carcarnall, and transitory things, compared with the things which are spirituall, heauenly and euerlasting? Also if great matters delight men, which appertaine vnto others, how much more the greatest, which concerne themselues? For who is the Birde in this Song that is so deare vnto Christ, vpon whom so many ornaments and goodly iewels are bestowed? Verily the whole Church, but yet so the whole, as euery faithfull soule is the spouse decked and made beautifull for so glorious an husband. The blindnesse and mad folly of the world is here to be wondred at. Behold the wisedome of the flesh which glorieth in it selfe. If one should forsake an infinite treasure of pearle & precious stones, and lay hold of a heape of drosse & for some glittering shew making choyse of it, all men would haue him in derision. The foolishnes of the wisest worldlings is much greater,

ter, while they so set their hearts vpon earthly riches, carnall delights, the pompe and glory of this world, and are so drowned in the vncleane lustes and pleasures of sinne, that they neglect the heauenly treasure, the rich iewels, and comely ornaments, spirituall ioy and glory which the Bridegroome Iesus Christ bestoweth vpon his spouse. There is no care in seeking after them: they delight to haue their bodies set forth and made glorious with goodly attire, not caring how they defile the garments of their soule or what filthy and stinking rags of vices it be cloathed withall. I do not speake this, as though a man could not haue both the glory of this world, and that glory which is from aboue: for king Dauid had both the one and the other: so had Salomon, with many other kings Nobles of the earth. But where any are so ouerwhelmed and euen drowned in the gulfe of vaine delights, and so rest in the glory of this world as a thing to be gloried in, that they cannot seek after the heauenly glory, there is the foolishnes. It is no maruaile that the holy Ghost termeth the great wise men of this world fooles: for who seeth not how sodainly all vanisheth away as a shadow that is heere below? King

Dauid

Dauid in Psal. 16. glorieth that God was the portion of his inheritance, and saith he had a faire heritage. But by & by he giueth thanks to God that gaue him counsell, yea euen by secret inspirations in the night, for if God had not taught him, he could neuer haue made so good a choise, when he was come to age, refused to be called the sonne of Pharaohs daughter, and chose rather to suffer aduersity with the people of God, then to enioy the pleasures of sinnes for a season. Esteeming the rebuke of Christ greater riches then the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect vnto the recompence of the reward. Heb. 11. 24. 25. 26. Your Lordship is taught of God to follow these, and to make the like choise, as it doth manifestly appeare by your singular loue and care to aduance his glorious Gospell: which maketh me to hope that my rude boldnes shall obtaine pardon. The most high God, increase and stablish your Honour, not only on earth, but also for euer in the high heauens. Amen.

Your Honours most dutifull to commaund.

George Gyffard.

SERMONS

VPON THE Song of Salomon.

The first Sermon.

CHAP. I.

1 *The Song of Songs which was Salomons.*

2 *Let him kisse mee with the kisses of his mouth: for thy loue is better then wine.*

3 *Because of the sauour of thy good ointments, thy name is as an oyntment powred out: therfore the virgins do loue thee.*

4 *Draw me, we will runne after thee: the king hath brought me into his chamber, wee wil be glad and reioyce in thee, we will remember thy loue more then wine, the righteous doe loue thee.*

5 *I am blacke O daughters of Ierusalem,*

but comely as the fruits of Kedar, and as the curtaines of Salomon.

6 Regarde yee mee, not because I am blacke, for the Sunne hath looked vpon me: the sonnes of my mother were angry with mee, they made mee the Keeper of the vines, but I kept not mine owne vine.

Shewe mee, O thou whom my soule loueth, where thou feedest, where thou lyest at noone: why should I bee as shee that turneth aside to the flockes of thy company.

BEfore that I enter into the handling of these wordes which I haue now read vnto you: It shall not be amisse to speake a few things in generall, touching this song, that you may first looke vpon it, as vpon a goodly rich peece of worke, but foulded vp, and then afterwards haue it vnfoulded and spredde before your eyes, to the viewing of euery part thereof. Heere bee diuers persons brought in vttering their parts in it, but especially two, which are louers, betrothed each vnto the other. This is so cleare

cleare and ſo euident by the wordes that none can denye it. It is then without all controuerſie, a ſong betweene a Bridegroome and a Bride, or a ſong of betrothings, for it was the manner in olde time, to haue marriage ſongs and ſongs of eſpouſals. True it is, that this Bridegroome and this Bride are not named by any proper names in all this ſong: but yet it is out of all controuerſie, and as cleare as the Sunne, who they be, by that deſcription which is made of them: For hee is deſcribed to bee a King, and of that glory and maieſty which no mortall creature hath: and her beauty and glory alſo is ſet foorth to bee ſuch, as far ſurmounteth all the glory of this world. Then of neceſſitie it doth follow, that this Bridegroome is Ieſus Chriſt the Redeemer, and Sauiour of the World, and this bride is his Church. Theſe bee the two vehement louers, which are here brought in. The holy Scriptures in other places doe vſe theſe ſpeeches of Chriſt and his Church, as that they are betrothed, and ſhall bee married. For the Church is called *the Bride, the Lambes wife*, Reuel. 21: ver. 9. And the day of iudgement is cal-

led, *The day of their marriage*, Reu. 19, v. 7 Alſo *Iohn* the Baptiſt, when ſome are diſpleaſed that Chriſt ſhould haue more honour then hee, frameth this anſwere vnto them euen from this Song, ſaying, *He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroome: but the friend of the bridgroome which ſtandeth & heareth him reioyceth greatly, becauſe of the bridegroomes voice*, Iohn 3. ver. 29 where you may ſee how hee calleth Chriſt the Bridegroome, his Church the Bride, and himſelfe the Bridegroomes friend. Chriſt calleth himſelfe the Bridegroome, *Marke* 3. It was the ancient manner, that the parties which ſhould bee man and wife, were betrothed, and then after ſome diſtance of time the marriage was ſolemnized. Betweene the time of their betrothing, and the marriage day, tokens of loue and kindneſſe, did vſe to paſſe betweene them: but when they are married, the wife is receyued into the ſociety of her husband, to be partaker with him of all his riches and poſſeſſions. The Lord Ieſus hath betrothed himſelfe to his holy Spouſe the Church, euen from the time of his promiſe made vnto *Adam* and *Eue*, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall breake the Ser-*

pents

pents head, Gen. 3. The marriage between them ſhall bee ſolemnized *at the day of iudgement*, as I noted before, Reuel. 16.7. Then ſhall ſhee be receyued to dwel with him in the heauens, and bee partakers of his riches and glory.

In the meane time, while ſhee is heere in this world, hee ſheweth great kindnes towards her, comforteth, ſupporteth and defendeth her, beſtowing alſo many goodly gifts and ornaments vpon her, and ſhe again for her part rendreth the tokēs of her loue towards him: and this Song ſetteth foorth all theſe things which doe paſſe thus betweene them. But you muſt note that all their ſpeeches is vnder an Allegorie, for when each of them dooth prayſe the beauty and comelineſſe of the other, looke what is beautifull, comely, or ſtately vnder heauen, it is brought in for to expreſſe the ſame. And to repreſent the ſpirituall and heauenly ornaments and iewel: which he beſtoweth vpon her, and the fruits of her loue which ſhe rendreth vnto him for the ſame, here are reckoned vp all the ſweeteſt, the richeſt, and the moſt precious thinges that are found among men. There is but one

bridegroome, and one bride: for all the elect from the beginning of the worlde vnto the end, doe make but one holy Catholike Church, being all coupled together by one ſpirite, to make one bodie, whereof Chriſt is the heade, but yet here are diuers perſons brought in beſides in this ſong, ſometime ſpeaking, and ſometime ſpoken vnto. Yea the bride ſpeaketh now and then of her mother, and of her little ſiſter.

Here we muſt note, that it was the manner of olde, that the bridgroome had young men to bee his companions, and ſo this bridegroome hath his companions or friends, not onely the holy Angels which miniſter vnto him for the ſeruice of his Church, *Heb.* 1. but alſo the Prophets, the Apoſtles, and all faithfull Paſtors and teachers, as *Iohn* the *Baptiſt* tearmeth himſelfe one of his friends. Alſo the bride had virgins to be her companions, and with theſe this Spouſe of Chriſt is ſaide to bee all ſo accompanied: Theſe are called the daughters of *Ieruſalem*. And touching the other matter that ſhee hath mother and a ſiſter, that may ſeeme ſomewhat harder to be vnderſtood: for

her

her mother is the true Church, and her little ſiſter alſo is the true church, and yet but one true church: how may this bee? This is eaſily anſwered: for it is the manner in the Hebrew tongue to call the whole the mother, and the parts of the whole are called daughters and ſiſters. Then marke this, that although there bee but one vniuerſal church, yet becauſe the ſame is neuer whole in the world at one time, the whole Church vpon earth is ſayde to haue a mother; for ſhee is but a part of the vniuerſall Chureh. And then further, the Church vpon earth in *Salomons* time did conſiſt of the nation of the Iewes: The Church of the Gentiles was not as then come, which is called her little ſiſter. Thus much may ſuffice touching this ſong in Generall, and now let vs come to the words of the Text.

Theſe ſeuen verſes which I haue read vnto you, are firſt to be diuided into two parts, whereof the one is the generall title or inſcription of this whole booke contained in one verſe: the other is the firſt ſpeech of the bride expreſſed in ſixe verſes following. As touching the title, it doth ſhew vnto vs two things: namely

that it is a Song of Songs, and that King *Salomon* did frame it, and write it. The former ſpeech may bee expounded two wayes, as to ſay, it is all but one ſong, and yet it containeth in it diuers ſongs. A ſong of ſongs, euen a ſong that conſiſteth of diuers ſongs, that is one way. Or rather after the vſuall phraſe of the Hebrew tong a ſong of ſongs, it is as much as to ſay, the principall or moſt excellent ſong of all others. This title then is giuen to commend vnto vs the worthineſſe of it, to the end that we may eſteeme of it accordingly: but let vs ſee how farre the compariſon reacheth, that is, with what ſongs it is compared, whether it bee ſaid to bee the moſt principall of all the ſongs, which are in the holy Scriptures, or of thoſe onely which King *Salomon* made: for hee made a thouſand and fiue, 1. King. 4. Now as this word (which) in our Engliſh tongue is vſed without difference of number or Gender: ſo is the word *aſher* in the Hebrew tong, that ſignifieth (which) in our tongue. Then if wee ſhould tranſlate it in the plurall number, and ſay thus, the ſong of ſongs which were Salomons, the compariſon ſhould be but in this manner

ner, this is, the most principal, or the most excellent song of all those thousand and fiue songs, which were *Salomons*: but if wee take it in the singular number, and say thus: the song of songs, which was *Salomons*, then doth the comparison stand generall, as if hee should say, this song which *Salomon* made, is the chiefe, and the most worthy song of all other, which are set forth in the holy Scripture. And this latter I take to be right.

There are many Psalmes and many songs in the sacred Bible, which doe excell all other songs that haue beene in the world, and no one of them but is very precious: yet this song excelleth them all: for if a man vnderstand it, he shall be forced to confesse, that there is not the like sweetnesse and comfort in any song. Seeing then that the Holy Ghost hath thus praysed it vnto vs, let vs giue al diligence to attaine to the true sence and vnderstanding of it, that wee may haue the vse of it to our ioy and comfort, as of a most precious iewell. And when wee reade that it was *Salomons*, wee are not to stay in the man: but wee must consider that he was a Prophet, and so in this worke, but the instru-

inſtrument and pen of the holy Ghoſt. It is not the word then of a man (though hee were the wiſeſt man) but the Worde of God, and with ſuch a minde wee are to receyue it. Thus much touching the title or inſcription.

Let him kiſſe mee with the kiſſes of his mouth, &c. The Bride doth beginne this worthy ſong, and (as you ſee) ſhee crieth out with a wonderfull deſire of her loue Chriſt to haue his preſence, and to be embraced of him, and to dwell with him: For all her ſpeech in theſe ſixe verſes tendeth to that one thing, ſauing that in the fift and ſixt verſe ſhee doth take away an obiection which may be made againſt her namely, that ſhee is blacke, and therefore nothing meete to be the Spouſe of ſuch a one as ſhee ſpeaketh of. But what? ſhall wee take it then, that the Church doth firſt ſeeke after Chriſt, becauſe ſhee is firſt brought in after this vehement manner, crying out to be with him? Doth not the holy Scripture teach the contrary, and ſay plainely, *Wee loue him, becauſe he loued vs firſt?* 1. Ioh. 4. verſe 19. Yea, and if you marke well her ſpeeches, you may ſee that it is his loue towardes her gone before, which

which draweth her thus earneſtly to ſeeke after him, Shee had f[illegible] his loue, and ſaith it is better then wine: Shee had found the ſweetneſſe of his graces and heauenly gifts, and therefore (as ſhe confeſſeth) doth loue him: Hee had let her ſee what rich treaſures hee hath layde vp in ſtore for her, and that enflameth her with a burning deſire to bee ioyned with him. And now touching her manner of Phraſe, *Let him kiſſe me with the kiſſes of his mouth*: we ſee that this beginning is according to that Allegorie, vnder which the whole ſong is written.

True louers which are betrothed, and haue promiſed marriage each to the other, do with kiſſes expreſſe their loue; The Church then being betrothed vnto Chriſt, vnder this geſture of louers, expreſſeth her ardent deſire of a neerer preſence of him her Spouſe, that he may embrace her, and giue her yet greater tokens of his loue, yea bee ioyned moſt neerely vnto her for euer. Where loue is hot, there be great paſſions in the mind, & the ſpeeches which doe expreſſe the ſame, are pathetical. Euen ſo heere this holy bride, this chaſte and pure Virgine, breaketh foorth into her ſpeech, with

with an exclamation, which is full of passions, not of naturall passions, but of spirituall loue and zeale, with which shee is inflamed, and euen as it were with an impatience, desireth a nearer coniunction with Christ.

But let vs come yet more neerely into the examination of her words, and more fully to see her affection. You see that she doth vehemently desire not onely to bee kissed of her spouse, but also as shee sayeth *With the kisses of his mouth.* Here you must marke well, why shee calleth them the kisses of his mouth; for this is not a superfluous speech. Out of his mouth proceedeth that sacred word, which is the Instrument whereby shee is ioyned vnto him: For by the liuely Oracles hee calleth her, hee lightneth her, he worketh faith in her, hee armeth her against her enemies, hee feedeth her: yea, to speake briefly, hee conuaieth all his graces, and all good things into her, euē by the same his word. No maruell then though shee bee enflamed with the desire of the kisses of his mouth. From hence it is, that *Dauid* doth so highly commend the holy doctrine of the Lord, that it is perfect, pure & infalli-

infallible, and of ſuch worthy operation and effects in the beleeuers, that he ſayth it is more to be deſired then gold, yea thē much fine gold, ſweeter then the honey, or the honey combe, *Pſal.* 19. But was the holy Spouſe at any time without the Word? for ſhee ſeemeth to crie for that which ſhee had not.

Chriſt did kiſſe his beloued Spouſe with ſome kiſſes of his mouth, euen from the beginning; for hee did betroth himſelfe vnto her by his word, his couenant, and promiſes, euen at the firſt. But marke how in his holy wiſedome hee hath diſpoſed the matter, ſo as he commeth neerer and neerer, as it were by degrees, euen vnto the full and perfect coniunction. *Adam* and all the holy Fathers before the floud had his Word and Couenant by which he did aſſure them of his loue and fauour vnto eternall ſaluation. Hee renued his promiſe with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, & *Iaacob*. And after that the Children of *Iſrael* were come out of the bondage of *Egypt*, he did more fully deliuer his lawes and ordinances vnto them by *Moſes*: but as yet all things were vnder figures and ſhadowes. *Moſes* and all the Prophets did

did foreſhew, that in the fulneſſe of time the Bridegroome himſelfe would come in his owne perſon and fulfill all thinges. Then commeth the cleare light of the Goſpell, and this is one of the kiſſes of his mouth, which ſhe ſo vehemently deſireth. All the Patriarkes, Prophets and holy ones, did wonderfully long to ſee the Bridegroome manifeſted in the fleſh. And therefore Chriſt telleth his Diſciples ſaying; *Bleſſed are the eyes that ſee that yee ſee: For I tell you, that many Prophets and Kings haue deſired to ſee theſe things which you ſee, and haue not ſeene them: and to heare thoſe things which you heare, and haue not heard them.* Luk. 10. ver. 24. This is (as I ſayd) one of the kiſſes of his mouth, which the holy Spouſe did ſo vehemently deſire. And ſhe did know, that there is yet a neerer kiſſe of his mouth, & that is, when hee ſhall ſay, *Come yee bleſſed of my Father, inherite the Kingdom, &c.* Math. 25. And for this is now her moſt earneſt deſire: For as Saint *Iohn* witneſſeth, *the Spirite and the Bride ſay, Come,* Reu. 22. 17. At the receyuing of this kiſſe, ſhe ſhal be ioined with him for euermore: & therfore ſhe deſireth this day aboue all

other.

other. Here then we may ſee, that while this holy Virgine, the Lambes wife is here below vpon the earth, yet her heart is in the heauens, her ioy is with her beloued, vnto whom ſhe deſireth to be ioyned. Is this the true Church? What ſhall we ſay then of them which are ſo worldly minded, that they neuer long after theſe kiſſes of the Bridegroome? Are their affections ſet vpon heauenly things, as *S. Paul* requireth? Col. 3. Beloued, Let euery man trie himſelfe: If ye feele the deſire to be ioyned with Chriſt by a true and liuely faith, which is ingendred by his word, euen as it were by the kiſſes of his mouth, and that yee long to bee with him in the heauens, bleſſed are yee, worldlings haue no ſuch longing.

It followeth, *For thy loue is better then wine:* In theſe words ſhee rendreth a reaſon of that her moſt vehement deſire, which ſhee hath to be ioyned with him. The ſumme of it is, that his loue wherwith hee hath loued her firſt, is ſo ſweete and comfortable, as that it is beyond all compariſon: ſhe ſayth it is better then wine, and wine is a very precious thing, which is, (as the ſcripture ſayeth) giuen

giuen to comfort mans heart. *Pſal.* 104. And becauſe wine is as a principall thing in banquets, it is here put for all the dainty, delicate, ſweete and comfortable, or coſtly things in the world, which the greateſt kings doe vſe in feaſtes and banquets: Sweet and dainty they bee indeede vnto the carnall man: and while the children of this world doe ſeeke very greedily to fill and ſtuffe themſelues with the ſame, repoſing their chiefe felicitie and comfort therein: the holy Spouſe ſheweth plainely that ſhee deſpiſeth theſe earthly dainties, and that the loue of Chriſt is ſweeter vnto her then they all. The delicate perſons which follow their pleaſures, and haue their fine muſicke and their ſweete wines, finde not ſuch delight and comfort in their banqueting, as ſhee doth in the loue of her ſpouſe Ieſus Chriſt. Then you ſee how her ſpeech ſtandeth, ſhee cryeth out with deſire to bee with him, rendring this reaſon, that his loue is better vnto her, then all the ſweete and dainetie things that Princes haue heere in the world.

How commeth it that this loue of Chriſt is ſo ſweete vnto her? or as ſhee ſpea-

ſpeaketh in the plurall number, thy loues, becauſe his loue is the principall of all. It is frō hence, that ſhe knoweth he would giue himſelfe for her, that hee might ſanctifie her, and clenſe her by the waſhing of water through the Word, that he might might make her vnto himſelfe a glorious Church, not hauing ſpot or wrinckle, &c. Eph. 5. ver. 25. 26. 27. The whole number of the Elect were in themſelues, vnder the thraldome of ſinne and condemnation, and ſhould all haue gone to hell, but that as Saint *Iohn* ſayeth, hee loued vs, and waſhed vs from our ſins in his bloud, and made vs Kings and Prieſts to God his Father, Reu. 1. ver. 5. 6. Is not here a ſweet loue, which is better (as ſhe ſayeth) then wine? This loue did *Moſes* feele through faith, and it cauſed him to refuſe to bee called the ſonne of Pharaohs daughter, & choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, then to enioy the pleaſures of ſinne for a ſeaſon, eſteeming the rebuke of Chriſt greater riches, then the treaſures of Egypt, Heb. 11. This loue did Saint Paul (who before was a blaſphemer and a perſecutor) feele the ſweetneſſe of it, and it cauſed him, as a man

crucified to the world, to despise al earthly treasures; and to say, I desire to bee dissolued and to be with Christ.

Weereade of a woman in the Gospel which washed the feet of our Lord with teares, and wiped them with the hayres of her head, she loued much, for in the aboundance of his loue, shee felt that hee had forgiuen her many sinnes. And doubtlesse, euery soule which through a true and liuely faith doth apprehend the forgiuenesse of sinnes in his bloud, cryeth out, *Let him kisse mee with the kisses of his mouth, for thy loue is better then wine.*

It followeth, *Because of the sauour of thy good ointments, thy name is as an oyntment powred out, therefore the virgins doe loue thee.* In this verse she rendreth a reason, why her hart is so set vpon him, and why shee doth so loue him, that in comparison of him shee renounceth all the glory and riches, and pleasures of this world, vtterly despising them as drosse and vanity. Her reason is drawne from the excellency of her beloued: that he is full of sweet things by which hee doth perfume her, and so maketh her sweet also. For that which

giueth

giueth the ſweeteſt ſauour, maketh a man to couet moſt after it. Her ſpeech wherewith ſhe ſetteth forth the commendation of his ſweetneſſe, is framed according to the figures of the Law. God commanded *Moſes* to make a precious ointment and therewith to annoint the tabernacle and the miniſtring veſſels, alſo *Aaron* & his ſonnes, Exod. 30. And as it is in Pſa. 133.

This ointment was powred vpon the head of *Aaron*, and went downe to the skirts of his cloathing. Hereby was figured the annointing of the Sonne of God, our Lord Ieſus with the holy Ghoſt, according as it is written, *The ſpirit of the Lord is vpon me, becauſe hee hath annointed mee*, Eſa 61. He is therefore Chriſt, euen the Lords annointed, he in our nature, that is in the Manhood, as the head ouer the whole church, hath receyued the fulneſſe of all graces, as it is written, that God gaue not the ſpirit to him by meaſure, Ioh. 3. v. 34. And that it pleaſed the Father, that in him all fulnes ſhould dwel, *Col.* 1. 19. Here is then the veſſell, which as the rich treaſurie is full of all heauenly and moſt ſweet graces, euen the man

Ieſus Chriſt. But marke how the Bride doth proceed further in this matter, If a ſweete oyntment be cloſed vp in a veſſell it remaineth ſweet within it ſelfe, and within the veſſell, the ſauour of it is little felt to thoſe that come neare it, but when it is powred forth, then the ſweetneſſe thereof doth ſpread and perfume all. Wee reade in the Goſpell of a woman which had a boxe of very coſtly ointment of ſpikenard, and ſhe brake the boxe, & poured the ointment vpon the head of Ieſus as he ſate at table, Marke 14 ver. 3. and the houſe was filled with the ſauour of the ointment, Iohn 12. ver. 3. So marke how ſhee ſpeaketh here, *At the ſauour of thy good oyntments, thy name is as an ointment powred out*: Or by this ſhee ſheweth, that the Bridegroome her welbeloued doth not as a cloſe veſſell keepe in to himſelfe thoſe ſweet graces wherewith he is annointed, but that they are in deede powred forth vpon her, to annoint her, & to make her ſweete alſo. The graces of Chriſt which are here called his ſweete ointments; are powred forth indeed, and doe flowe from him the head into all parts of his myſticall body, that is to ſay, vpon

all

all the members of his Church, which being made partakers of his annointing, and called Christians: as it is written, Of his fulneſſe wee all receyue, euen grace for grace, Ioh. 1. ver. 16. But marke now how his name is an ointment powred foorth: He fulfilled all righteouſnes, Math. 3 ver. 15. He offered himſelfe by his eternall ſpirit without ſpot vnto God, Heb. 9. ver. 14. He hath by his ſacrifice of himſelfe, euen by the bloud of his Croſſe, appeaſed the wrath of his Father, and made reconciliation for the ſins of the world: He doth cloath al his Elect with his own holineſſe, he doth ſlay ſinne in them, and repleniſheth them with the vertues and graces of his ſpirite, thus is his name as a precious ointment powred out. And therefore (ſayth ſhe) the Virgins do loue thee.

When Chriſt crucified is preached, when the vertue and power of his death and reſurrection are ſhewed, when all his graces are diſplayed, and layde open, then is, as it were, the boxe of the good oyntments broken, and his name is as an ointment powred foorth, then is there a moſt ſweet ſauour, which cauſeth the Virgines

to loue him. Thus you see that the sweetnes of his graces and heauenly gifts powred forth vpon her, haue enflamed her heart with this vehement loue and desire to bee with him. Al men are by nature vncleane, filthy, stinking and loathsome but all doe not so well perceyue it, onely the regenerate doe come to the true sense of the loathsome sauour of their sinnes, & feele that they are made sweet by his sweet oyntments, and these are they that doe loue him.

But how is this? that shee sayeth Virgins doe loue him? Is there any other virgin that doth loue Christ besides her self? Is not she alone his Spouse, and the onely chast and pure one? Who then bee these virgins that she speaketh of? They be her daughters, they be her companions, they be her selfe: for though she bee but one, if wee respect the whole body, yet because shee consisteth of many, euen of all the elect, shee speaketh also of her selfe as of many. She is a chast virgin, and euery faithful soule is a chast virgin vnto Christ. Saint *Paul* sayth, he was iealous ouer the Church of Corinth with a godly iealousie, for I haue (sayth hee) coupled you

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to one man, to preſent you a chaſt virgin vnto Chriſt, 2. *Cor.*11.ver.2. Theſe virgins bee all the chaſt worſhippers of God Reu.14.ver.4. Theſe onely doe ſmell the ſweete ſauour of Chriſt. The worldlings whom the Scripture calleth adulterers and adultereſſes, Iam.4. ver.4. becauſe they doe by giuing their heart to the world, euen to vncleane luſts of the fleſh, commit ſpirituall whoredome againſt God, are drowned and ouerwhelmed in the ſtinke of filthy vncleanneſſe, and cannot ſmell the ſweet ointments of Chriſt: and therefore they doe not, nor cannot loue him.

In the next verſe ſhe ſayeth, *Draw me, wee wil runne after thee: the King hath brought mee into his Chambers, wee will bee glad and reioyce in thee, wee will remember thy loue more then wine, the righteous doe loue thee.* Here ſhee vttereth ſtill her vehement affections, and deſire to bee with her Chriſt, in diuers ſpeeches, which wee willl handle briefly as they lie. Wee haue ſeene by her former ſpeeches, that by his loue towards her, and by the ſweeteneſſe of his graces powred forth vpon her, ſhee is ſo inflamed with loue of him, and with

the desire of being ioyned vnto him, that in heart and mind, and affection shee mounteth vp aboue the heauens, despising all things here below vnder the sun, eyther riches, pleasures or glory, as meere trash and vanity. Her bridegroome is farre beyond them all in price and dignity, hee is her onely treasure and ioy: this (I say) we haue seene by her speech, and now is it come to this, that shee sayeth: *Draw mee, wee will runne after thee?* Alas good virgin, hath shee so great a desire to runne after him, her only ioy in whom shee knoweth is all felicitie, and doe not her legs serue? Doth her strength fayle? or doth shee faint in the race? Doth shee desire most vehemently, and yet cannot performe? Yea verily it is euen so. This is her estate. Shee doth plainely confesse her frailety, and the feeblenes of her knees, that shee cannot runne after him, except he draw her. What should bee the reason of this? Surely her race is vpward, and she hath a burden vpon her that presseth her downe: yea all the virgins, all her daughters, all her companions haue their load vpon them.

Though they loue Christ, yet they can-

cannot continue their race after him any faſter then hee ſhall draw them. If hee ceaſe drawing, they giue ouer running: If you will demaund what it is which doth ſo burden and preſſe down, ſo clog and hamper the feet, and make the knees ſo feeble: The holy Ghoſt doth tell you, if you will reade, Heb. 12. ver. 1. The ſpirit and grace of God doth draw, but the corruption of our nature in euery one doth euen ſtriue to quench the Spirite: Therefore the holy Apoſtle ſayeth, the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirite, ſo that you cannot do what you would, Gal. 5.

The ſame doctrine hee teacheth, Romaines 7. And Chriſt Ieſus ſayde to his Apoſtles: *The Spirit is willing, but the fleſh is weake*, Math. 26. ver. 41. And no man (ſayth he) commeth vnto mee, except the Father that ſent me, doe draw him, Io. 6. Marke well this Prayer of the holy ſpouſe: for therby you may ſee plainly how contrary ſhee is to that bolde and impudent ſtrumpet, the Whore of Babel, euen that idolatrous Church of Rome, which maintaineth with ſharpe arguments, euen with fire and ſworde, that men haue free Will and power

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of themſelues, being once aſſiſted by grace, to runne vnto Chriſt.

The filthy harlot condemneth this holy virgin of hereſie, becauſe ſhee will not herein ioyne with her. Indeed, that wicked whore ſayth, that mans will is ſo enfeebled, that without grace it can doe nothing, but preuented, and holpen, and as it were, ſet on foote by grace, ſhee ſayth, it can and doth performe all things. Marke (I ſay) how the Bride doth heere gainesay her: for ſhee had receyued grace ſhee had runne, and doth runne, and craueth his graces that ſhee may runne ſtill, yea, and that ſhee may runne faſter, and runne to the end. It is not then (brethren) as thoſe falſe ſpirits do beare men in hand that man is but maimed and halfe dead, and being ſet vp, and ſupported by grace, can runne then of himſelfe. Nay, there muſt be graee vpon grace, ſtill euen to the end. Hereupon the faithfull ſoules feeling how they bee ſtill euen yoaked with the remnants of ſinne, and crying day and night vnto the Lord Ieſus to quicken thē and to ſtrengthen them, and to draw thē by his liuely word and holy ſpirite, that they may runne after him, do farre differ

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thoſe proud hypocrites which glory in themſelues, that they can runne, and can doe what they luſt.

It followeth, *The King brought mee into his chambers, &c.* The words which follow, doe ſhew that this clauſe ſhould rather bee tranſlated thus: When the king ſhall bring mee into his Chambers: for ſhee ſpeaketh of a ioy and gladnes which ſhall follow thereupon. This is out of doubt, that hee had before this time brought her into his chambers: for ſhee ſpeaketh of a thing with which ſhee was not vnacquainted. For ſuch here among men that did betroth themſelues, doe willingly make known vnto them, to whom they are betrothed, what riches, and treaſures they haue in ſtore for them to poſſeſſe when they ſhall come to be their wiues: So our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, hauing betrothed himſelfe vnto his Church, had from time to time, euen from the beginning led her into his chambers, and ſhewed her what treaſures, riches and glory hee hath layd vp for her in the heauens Kings haue the greateſt treaſures vppon earth, and the richeſt ornaments in their chambers: This King that ſhe ſpeaketh of, is

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the greateſt of all Kings, and all the riches of the Kings of this World, are but droſſe in compariſon of thoſe which he hath layde vp, and reſerueth in the heauenly manſions for his beloued Spouſe.

True it is, that ſhe hath had but a glimmering of them, and therefore ſtill coueteth to ſee them more fully: & her bridegroom hath opened them vnto her more fully at ſome time then at other. He ledde her into the chambers in the time of the Law, and opened his treaſures vnto her, to ſhew her the riches and glory of his kingdome, which ſhe ſhall inherite with him: but this he hath done more fully vnder the Goſpell, ſince he was manifeſted in the fleſh, and moſt fully it ſhall bee done at the day of the marriage, when he ſhall receiue her home vnto him to dwell with him in the heauens for euer. But here it may be demaunded, how hee leadeth her into his chambers, that is, into the heauens, while ſhe is yet in the earth? You muſt vnderſtand that this leading is ſpirituall: hee doth giue vnto her an eye of faith, by which ſhe beholdeth the inuiſible heauenly riches and treaſures of life.

life. His word layeth them open, and his ſpirit giueth the ſight, as the holy Apoſtle ſayth: *The eye hath not ſeene, and the eare hath not heard, neyther haue entred into the hart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that loue him, but God hath reuealed them vnto vs by his ſpirite*, 1. Cor: 2.9.10. you ſee then that it is the holy ſpirit, by which the Bridegroome leadeth the Bride into his chamber, to ſhew what thinges hee hath prepared for her, which ſpirit dealeth not without the word Then behold what is added, *We wil reioice and be glad in thee, &c.* Here is ſpiritual ioy, here is mirth and gladneſſe which followeth vpon the ſight of the heauenly treaſures. Take a virgin which is betrothed vnto ſome great Prince, and lead her into his chambers, and ſhew vnto her all his rich ornaments and glory, aſſuring her, that all is kept for her, wil it not make her to reioyce and be glad? will not her mind be much affected with the loue of ſuch a husband? This virgin is ledde into the heauenly chambers, and there is ſhewed vnto her the glory and the riches of the Life to come, which ſhee ſhall keepe and poſſeſſe: how is it

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possible then, but that she should be euen repleniſhed with ioy and gladneſſe? How can it be otherwiſe, but that shee shal mẽtion his loue (as she saith) more then wine? Is there any thing in this world, which will not seeme vile vnto her in comparison? Yea, will not shee (that is to say, euen all the righteous) loue him, magnifie him, extoll and prayse him, and his loue? Some of the children of this world, when the Goſpell is preached, are a little lightned, and doe as it were, peepe in at the doores of theſe Chambers of the Bridegroome, and haue a little dimme ſight of the riches and glory, and are a little moued therewith for the time vnto ioy and gladneſſe: but the pleaſures and cares of this world, which are deepely ſeated in their heartes, doe put out all again. Their faith, their hope, and their ioy in heauenly things doe vaniſh, and they lay hold of things tranſitory.

Beloued, let vs take heede that wee be not ſuch, let vs not in our vncleannes ſtand without to peepe in at the doores, and away; but let vs endeauour to bee of theſe pure virgins, and ſo with our holy mother be led into the chambers, that wee may

may throughly view the heauenly treasures layde vp, and bee assured that they be kept for vs, and so reioyce, (as S. *Peter* sayeth) *with ioy vnspeakeable and glorious*: 1. Pet. 1. vers. 4. 5. 8. for then shall wee mention his loue more then wine, then shall we despise all things here below, and we shall loue him. Well let vs come now vnto her next speech.

I am blacke, O daughters of Ierusalem, but comely, &c. Now shee commeth to take away the obiection, which may bee made against her after this manner. It falleth out sometimes, that some doe loue them, which doe not loue them againe. Thou art wrapt with a vehement loue, but is not towardes such a one as careth not for thee? for thou settest him forth to be a glorious king, so rich, and so full of sweet things, as that nothing vnder heauen is any thing comparable vnto him. Thou art not fit to bee the wife of such an one: how should he loue thee? for thou art blacke. Is it not meete that so goodly a king should haue a right beautifull Queene? How can shee answer this? She doth answer it fully. First, confessing that shee is blacke indeed. I know that I

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am blacke, but yet withall I am comely: I am well fauoured. Then ſhee vſeth two compariſons: the one to ſhew her blackneſſe, the other to ſet forth her comelines. Touching the firſt compariſon, our tranſlation ſayth, *As the fruits of Kedar*: but the words are, *As the tents of Kedar*. They were men which in hote countries kept cattell, and remouing from place to place, dwelt in boothes and tents. The other compariſon is in theſe words, *As the curtains or the hangings of Salomon*. Now wee muſt know that in both theſe there is a figuratiue ſpeech: for by the tents and the curtaines are vnderſtood thoſe that dwell in them. As if ſhee ſhould ſay, I am blacke indeed, as the men in the tents of Kedar, which are ſunne-burnt; but yet I am comly, as they that dwell in the Court of *Salomon*: For theſe curtaines are all the hangings, yea by them is vnderſtood all the whole glory of *Salomons* Court. Wee reade in the holy Scriptures, that there was no glory in the world comparable to the glory of King *Salomon*.

The Queene of *Saba* was aſtoniſhed when ſhee beheld it. If the ſpiritual comlineſſe and beauty of the Spouſe of Chriſt,

now

now in the time of her frailety and imperfection, bee comparable with *Salomon* in al his royalty, yea do exceed him: what shal her beauty bee, when all her blacknes shall bee taken away, and Christ shall wash her, and make her a glorious church, not hauing spotte or blemish, *Eph.* 5.

But now where as shee confesseth that shee is blacke, is it not some cause to empayre her dignity, or may shee not iustly for the same bee the lesse esteemed? No for shee doth answere to that, shewing that her blacknesse is not natiue, it is not according to her spirituall birth, it is accidentary, it is but for a time, shee is but sunne burnt: *Looke not vpon mee* (sayeth shee) *that I am somewhat blacke, for the sunne hath shined vpon me.*

A notable place to teach vs to take heede how we esteeme the Church of Christ: for many haue despised her, reproached and forsaken her, because she is blacke. It hath been their vtter destruction, that they could not looke into her inward beauty, and put a difference betweene her present estate of frailety and imperfection, & that perfect beauty vnto which shee shall come. This admonition

which ſhee giueth, is right neceſſary at all times for her weake daughters, leaſt they be offended, and forſake her for her blacknes: but there is then an other queſtion ariſeth: why ſhould ſhe be Sunne-burnt? If ſhee bee ſo great a Queene, the darling of a moſt high and glorious king, what occaſion hath ſhee to empayre her beauty? To this ſhe anſwereth, that it is a cruell violence, and a ſpitefull iniury offered vnto her, and that by ſuch as of all other ought leaſt ſo to deale with her. Shee vſeth this ſimilitude, as if a young beautifull virgin dwelling in her mothers houſe had churliſh and rough fellowes to her brethren, who in anger thruſt her out at doores to keepe the vines, and ſo ſhee is compelled to bee in the ſunne, and to bee ſunne-burnt. And ſo ſhee ſayeth, *That her mothers ſonnes were angry with her, and made her the Keeper of the vines.* It is a moſt cleare caſe that the holy Church, and all her perfecteſt children doe want of the perfect beauty while they liue here, and are ſomewhat blacke, partly through ſinnes, which doe remaine in them, and partly through afflictions. I neede not ſtand to proue this, being a matter ſo euident.

dent. But herein is ſome difficulty, who they bee whom ſhee calleth her mothers ſonnes. Some haue taken it that ſhee calleth originall ſinne, euen all the concupiſcences of the fleſh, which are in all the elect from the wombe, her mothers ſons: for by theſe ſhee is forced to commit many ſinnes which dimme her beauty, and to omit the doing her duty in part for her own vine, ſhee ſayth ſhee did not keepe, wherein the true beauty conſiſteth. All this is true, and according to that which Saint *Paul* ſpeaketh of himſelfe, *Rom.7.*

But I doe not ſee how concupiſcences can be called the ſonnes of her mother, for in this ſong ſhe calleth the church that was of former time her mother. Shee doth not (as I take it) ſpeake of any mother but one. I take it therefore rather, that ſhee calleth the degenerate children her mothers ſonnes. They bee borne in the Church, they bee deſcended of the holy ones, they bee by outward profeſſion the children of the true Church: but ſhee calleth them not the ſonnes of God, nor yet her brethren, for they bee very baſtards and degenerate children:

Such were the wicked Priests and false Prophets in the time of the Law, such haue beene all the Heretikes, popish Prelates, and sects of idolatrous and superstitious orders vnder the Gospell, All these haue arrogantly challenged to themselues the honour and dignity of Gods church, and with wrath and fury haue offered violence vnto the true spouse of Christ, wher of shee here complaineth,

It would be a matter ouer long and tedious for me to rehearse what persecutions and afflictions these haue layde vpon the Church, and what desolations and deformities they haue brought vpon her: True it is, that God by these hath afflicted and chastised his chosen people for their sinnes. Then wee see why shee is somewhat blacke, and it standeth vs vpon that wee take heede wee despise her not for the same. Howsoeuer she seemeth to the eyes of the world, to bee base and farre vnmeete for such a bridegroome, yet is shee beautifull in his eyes, and hee will rid her, and set her free from all infirmities, & from the violence of her cruell foes, he wil make her to shine in perfect beauty and glory, yea shee shall be bright as the sunne

in

in the firmament.

Now ſhe turneth her ſpeech again vnto her beloued (that it may appeare hee regardeth her) praying moſt earneſtly vnto him, that hee will ſhew her where hee feedeth, and where hee cauſeth his flocke to lye downe at noone (for ſo the words are to be tranſlated) ſhewing that if hee doe not, it would not be for his honour, nor for her good. For the ſenſe of this, firſt you know that Chriſt is the great ſhepheard, and therefore the church on earth ſeeketh onely after him to bee fedde: For when ſhee calleth vpon him to ſhew her where hee feedeth his ſheepe, it is to this end, that hee will feed her as hee fed the flockes of former times, for ſhe knoweth that there is but one true ſhepheard, who feedeth all his ſheepe with the ſame paſture: ſhee looketh for no wholeſome foode vnleſſe it bee with the auncient Churches. Then next, it was the manner of the ſhepheards in thoſe hote Countries to driue their ſheepe in the heate of the day, vnto a place of ſhadow where they might lye downe, and refreſh them in that time of the parching heate. The bride craueth inſtantly of him whom

ſhee loueth moſt entirely, that hee will ſhew vnto her the place where hee cauſeth his flocke to lye downe at noone. The ſumme of her requeſt is, that he wil not onely as her great ſhepheard, feede her with his wholeſome food of life, but alſo that he will refreſh her, as it were in the ſhadow, when the Sunne ſhineth hoteſt, that is, when perſecutions, be the greateſt. For by the parching heate of the ſunne, is meant the heate of perſecution as our Sauiour teacheth, Math. 13. A moſt worthy place to be noted, that the true Church doth not onely depend vpon Chriſt Ieſus alone for her foode, reiecting all doctrines of men, but alſo is in the middeſt of the hoteſt perſecutions, refreſhed by him. When tyrants doe rage, you would thinke that the poore Church was neglected of him, as moſt wretched, and moſt miſerable: but it is nothing ſo: for euen then doth he refreſh her in his comfortable ſhadow: for the faithfull receyuing the comforter whom hee ſendeth, *Iohn* 16. Doo reioyce in afflictions, Rom. 5. ver. 3. And when they haue trouble in the world, they haue peace in Chriſt, *Iohn* 16. verſ. 33. Behold the wonderfull

power

power of the Lord, vnto thoſe whom hee feedeth.

Men are afraide to profeſſe the goſpell, becauſe of the cruell perſecutors, and ſo they do account it a ſafety to flye from Chriſt: the holy Church is contrary, ſhe doth not ſeeke, how ſhee may deale couertly, and ſo auoyde perill, but openly approacheth vnto Chriſt, knowing that hee can, and will refreſh her, euen when the Sunne ſhineth hoteſt. Let vs then ſeeke with our mother, and cleaue vnto Chriſt, for hee hath a layer, at noone hee will refreſh vs, and make vs in him to lie downe in peace, euen in the middeſt of the burning flames. All the holy Martyrs which ſuffered for the Goſpell doe teſtifie theſe this thing: Why ſhould we then bee afraide? Then touching the reaſon, which ſhee addeth, that if hee doo not ſhew her where hee feedeth, and alſo refreſh her in the heate, ſuch is her frailety. that ſhee ſhall decline and ioyne with falſe Worſhippers; and that would not be to his honour, nor to her good. *Why* (ſayth ſhee) *ſhould I bee as one that turneth aſide to the flockes of thy companions?* or as it may well bee tranſlated, as one that

pitcheth or ſpreadeth her Tent by the flockes of thy companions. That the faithfull doe worſhippe God aright in ſpirite and truth: *Iohn* 4. and doe not ioyne with idolaters, they haue it not of themſelues, but from hence, that they be all taught of God, *Iohn* 6. verſe 45. But if ſhee ſpeake heere of idolatrous flockes, vnto whome ſhee ſhall turne, if Chriſt do not teach her, then the Maſters of falſe worſhippe are called the companions of Chriſt, is not that a dignity ouer great for ſuch wicked men? for anſwere vnto this, wee muſt note that ſhee doth not call them, ſo giuing vnto them thereby any dignity, but rather noting thereby what wicked vſurpers they be. For Chriſt is the onely Maſter, the onely ſhepheard, the onely Teacher of the true worſhippe of God: and all ſuch as ſet vp a worſhippe and a doctrine of their owne, aduance themſelues euen to be his companions. Such a companion is the Pope, for hee doth take vpon him to frame a Religion, and ſtandeth to maintaine that it is of equall authority with the religion of Chriſt.

But wee are taught heere to ſeeke vn-

to

to the Lord Ieſus, that hee may ſhewe vnto vs where he feedeth his flocke, that wee may ioyne with the ſame, and bee fedde by him, and ſo kept, that we decline not to the flockes of ſuch companions. The Lord giue vs that grace, Amen.

Let vs pray.

THE

The second Sermon.

CHAP. I.

8 *If thou know not, O thou fayreſt among women, get thee forth by the ſteps of the ſtocke and feede thy Kids by the tents of the ſhepheards.*

9 *I haue compared thee my loue, vnto the troupe of horſes in the Chariots of Pharaoh.*

10 *Thy cheekes are comely with rowes of ſtones, and thy necke with chaines.*

11 *Wee will make thee borders of golde, with ſtuds of ſiluer.*

12 *While the King was at his repaſt, my ſpikenard gaue the ſmell thereof.*

13 *My welbeloued is as a bundle of myrrhe vnto me, hee ſhall lodge betweene my breaſts.*

14 *My welbeloued is as a cluſter of Camphire vnto mee in the vines of Engedie.*

15 *My loue, behold, thou art fayre, behold thou art fayre, thine eyes are like the doues.*

16 *My*

16 *My welbeloued, behold thou art fayre and pleaſant, alſo our bed is greene.*

17 *The beames of our houſe are Cedars, the rafters are of Firrh.*

THe ſpeeches of the bride ſeeking after her welbeloued, are paſt in the former part of this chapter; and now wee ſhall heare what the Bridegroome ſayeth, for he anſwereth in foure verſes, and then each doth commend the other by courſe. Her laſt requeſt which ſhe made vnto him was this: that *Hee would ſhew her where hee feedeth: and where hee cauſeth the flocke to lye downe at noone.* And vnto this hee doth frame his firſt ſpeech in moſt kind and louing manner, thus: *If thou know not* (ſayth he) *O thou fayreſt among women.* The verie forme of his ſpeech dooth ſeeme to import thus much: That it is a ſtraunge thing, that ſhe doth not know where hee feedeth his flocke: for hath hee not from the beginning fedde his Church, ſo as the church

church hath knowne how and where he hath fed her? yes doubtleſſe, but yet the falſe teachers haue oftentimes ſo preuailed and haue ſo confidently challenged to themſelues the name and title of the true Church, and the true knowledge hath beene oftentimes ſo darkened, that the poore ſheepe of Chriſt haue not knowne almoſt which way to turne them, beeing in danger of ioyning themſelues to the flockes of thoſe companions, but that they haue had their refuge in flying vnto Chriſt to be taught the truth by him. Partly indeed (as it cannot be denyed) by negligence thoſe things come to paſſe: but Chriſt doth not vpbraide her with that, but doth very readily inſtruct her, as wee ſhall ſee in that which followeth. Then further that he calleth her, *The fayreſt among women*, you may ſee how beautifull and comely ſhee is in his ſight. Howſoeuer ſhee ſeemeth in her owne eyes to be blacke (as all the faithfull are priuy to their owne deformities) and howſoeuer others doe deſpiſe her while they doe eſteeme her to bee voyde of beauty: yet vnto Chriſt ſhee is the fayreſt of all other. Great flockes there haue beene in the World

World of fundry profeſſions, and goodly glory, and externall ornaments they haue beene decked withall: but theyr beauty in the eyes of the Lord is nothing comparable to the beauty of his Spouſe, who is baſe in outward ſhew, but yet by her ſpirituall ornaments ſhee excelleth them all, ſo that hee calleth her *The fayreſt among wome n.*

This is a wonderfull comfort vnto euery faithfull ſoule, when the Diuell in time of temptation ſhall ſuggeſt after this manner: Thou art ſpotted and defiled with many ſinnes and offences: thou art foule, thou art blacke, thou art deformed: how ſhould the moſt holy and glorious Lord Ieſus delight in thee? Conſider thy ſelfe, what reaſon haſt thou to thinke that thou ſhalt bee married vnto him? Yea what ſhould perſwade thee, that hee regardeth thy prayers? that the voyce of Chriſt is this: *O thou fayreſt among women.* What would ye haue more? whē we are ſo full of deformities, yet fayre in his eyes. But how then? is that which is blacke fair in the eyes of Chriſt? No verily, for he cā approue nothing that is vnclean, but he beholdeth the beuty of his ſpouſe, ſo far as

ſhe

is regenerate & decked with vertues: and as for her blacknes and deformities, they ſhall be wholy taken away. So hee beholdeth her iuſtified and ſanctified in himſelfe.

And thus much touching his kinde ſpeech: and now let vs ſee what aunſwere he maketh vnto her requeſt. Shee doth entreate him of all loue to ſhew her where he feedeth his flocke, that ſhe may ioyne her ſelfe there to be fed with them, vnder him, and by him her onely ſhepheard. And marke what hee biddeth her doe, that ſhe may obtaine her deſire heerein. *Goe forth* (ſayde he) *by the ſteps of the flocke, and feede thy kiddes by the Tents of the ſhepheards.* Is this the way to finde him where hee feedeth, and where hee cauſeth his flocke to lye downe at noone? Is this a ſufficient aunſwer to her requeſt: yes doubtleſſe: Chriſt aunſwereth her deſire to the full: Let vs therefore conſider the ſenſe of his words: for they inſtruct vs in a moſt weighty matter. Some doe tranſlate them thus: *Seeing thou knoweſt not, O thou fayreſt among women, get forth, ſtay not in the footſteppes of that flocke, and feede thy Kids aboue the tents of other ſhep-*

ſhepheards. As if he ſhould will her to come away from thoſe flockes of his companions, as ſhee called them, and not walke in their wayes: for albeit they in theyr blinde deuotion pretend to worſhippe God, yet indeed they worſhippe Diuels. And ſeeing the doctrines and religions of thoſe companions bee from mans inuention, and ſo are of the earth here below, yea euen from the pit of hell: ſhee muſt feede her kids aboue the tentes of thoſe other ſhepherds, ſhe muſt lead them into the heauenly paſtures.

This is a godly ſenſe, but I doe not ſee how the wordes will beare it in this place. Indeed the prepoſition *gnal* ſignifieth indifferently, aboue, vpon, or beſide, as to ſay, aboue the tents, or beſides the tents. But in the other words there is a very eclipſe, when the words are plainly ſet downe thus, *Goe foorth in the ſteppes of the flocke*, to ſay, *Goe foorth, ſtay not, or walke not in the ſteppes of the flocke.* And moreouer we are to note that in her vehement ſuite vnto Chriſt, hee would ſhew her where hee feedeth: ſhee ſayth: *Why ſhould I bee as one that turneth aſide to the flockes of thy companions?* Shee ſayth not to

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the flocke. The falſe worſhippers be many flockes, and ſo ſhee calleth them: for they differ in their Religion each from other.

If Chriſt then had ſpoken of thoſe, he would haue called them flockes, as ſhee did, and not a flocke. Hee would haue ſayd, Goe forth, Walke not in the ſteppes of thoſe flockes which thou ſpeakeſt of. The true Church indeede conſiſteth of many ſeuerall flockes, if we reſpect the diuerſity of times and places: but if we reſpect the vnity of their faith, and how they be made one miſtical body of Chriſt they bee all but one flocke. Againe wee finde in the holy Scriptures that Hypocrites and counterfeyte worſhippers are called Goates; yea, they be euen heardes of ſwine, or rather of Wolues, and ſuch like cruell beaſts, we finde them not called ſheepe, as the Lords people are called his ſheepe.

Now in this place the words do ſtand thus: Go forth in the ſteps of the ſheepe. I take it therefore very cleere, that hee ſpeaketh of the people of God, ſaying, *Go foorth in the ſteps of the ſheepe.* If thou wilt finde mee where I doe feede my ſheepe, that

that thou mayeſt ioyne with them to become one flocke, goe forth in their ſteps, and feede thy Kids by the tents of the ſhepheards.

Here is the way for all the faithfull to finde where the great ſhepheard of the ſheepe, our Lord Ieſus feedeth his flocke: then let vs conſider diligentlie of it, that wee may follow his direction. It is the Church which maketh her prayer, that he would ſhew vnto her where he feedeth. What flocke doth hee feede beſides the Church? Is not ſhee his onely flocke? What other ſheepe then are thoſe whoſe ſteps ſhee muſt trace to finde where hee feedeth? Indeede the Church is but one, and Chriſt feedeth none other flocke beſides her: but you muſt obſerue that this is the prayer of the Church euer vppon earth: *Shew mee, O thou whom my ſoule loueth, where thou feedeſt.* And there be which were vpon earth in former time, which are gone out of the World. Theſe are the ſheepe in whoſe ſteps hee willeth her to goe forth, and by the ſteppes of theſe ſhee ſhall come to finde where the wholeſome paſture is.

The caſe ſtandeth thus: There is

but one true faith, one holy Religion,& worſhip of God, one pure doctrine, one ſpirituall food or paſture for all that come to life.

Although it hath not beene de,iuered at all times alike, or vnder one forme: for Fathers vnder the Law had all vnder figures and ſhadowes, which the Goſpell layeth open clearely. Hereupon it followeth, that when there ariſe Sectmaſters, Heretikes and falſe teachers, which draw flockes of Diſciples afrer them, and each company boaſteth that they bee the true Church, and now the faithfull in the middeſt of theſe confuſions, crie out vnto Chriſt, to ſhew them where he doth feed: his pirection is this: Goe forth in the ſteps of the ſheepe, looke into the wayes of the ancient Churches, looke what doctrine, and what religion they profeſſed, looke what ſhepheards fedde them, ioyn your ſelues to the tents of the ſame ſhephearps, and feede in the ſame paſture. Here then bee two things chiefly to be conſidered: which alſo muſt not be parted a ſunder, the ſteps of the ſheepe, and the tents of the ſhepheards: for there is a great controuerſie betweene vs, and the Rowiſh church:

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They call vs Schismatikes, and we stand to maintaine that they be the Synagogue of Antichrist, the great whore of Babel, the mother of whoredomes and abominations of the earth, an idolatrous strumpet. To the triall we come, they crye out for the steps of the auncient flockes, and the tents of the ancient shepheards that fedde them, and so doe we.

Herein we do consent: but yet when wee come to the point, we differ as far as light and darknesse: For whereas wee looke vnto the steps of *Abraham*, *Isaack*, and *Iacob*, and other holy men, whom the Scripture commendeth, wee looke vnto the faith, the doctrine and the religion of *Moses* and the Prophets, yea of the Apostles and Martyres of Christ Iesus; wee looke how they worshipped, and how they liued, as the sacred Histories of the Bible doe set foorth vnto vs: for if the word of God did not testifie of them, how should wee know their steppes to bee the steps of Christs flock? Also we looke who were the shepheards vnder Christ in auncient time, euen the Prophets and the Apostles, wee looke vnto their tents, and by them wee seeke for pasture. Wee

looke only vnto the written word which is deliuered vnto vs from God by them: for their writings are as the ſhepheardes tents erected, and there only is the wholeſome foode, there bee the greene paſtures there wee ioyne our ſelues vnto the true ſheepe of Chriſt: This is our courſe, as Chriſt here willeth. The Papiſt will none of this: but they will let paſſe the ſteps of *Abraham*, *Iſaack* and *Iacob*, of the Patriarkes and Prophets of the Apoſtles, and other holy men, of whom the Word of God beareth witneſſe: they will not allow that the writings of the Prophets and Apoſtles ſhall bee the tents of theſe ſhepheards, of whom Chriſt ſpeaketh, they hold not that to be the onely wholeſome paſture, with which they feede Gods people. And they will haue men looke to the ſteps of certaine Popes, Cardinals, Monks, Fryers, & a deale of ſuch vermine which for the ſpace of ſome fiue or ſixe hundred yeares hath crawled vppon the earth. They ſend vs to the decrees of Popes and Popiſh Prelates, and to their owne conſtitutions, there will they haue the tents of the ſhepheards to be, and the wholeſome paſtures. What a blindeneſſe

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is it in all those which cā not see that these be very theeues & murtherers? For when Christ willeth vs to go foorth by the steps of the sheepe, & to feede by the tents of the shepheards, what sheepe meaneth he, but those whom he hath giuen testimony vnto by his word, that they were his faithfull worshippers? Where shall wee seeke the Church but in the holy Scriptures of the Apostles and Prophets? When hee speaketh of the tents of the shepheardes, which fed and guyded those auncient flockes, whom shall wee take them to be but onely those whom hee hath declared to bee his seruants? euen the holy Apostles and Prophets? Then marke these Popish seducers. They teach many strange doctrines, contrary to the doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets, euen doctrines of Diuels:

They worship Idols, and haue a thousand superstitions: and when they should proue thē that mē may come to ioyn with the ancient people of God, and to feede by the tents of those faithfull shepheards: they stand by the way side, & tel men that they will proue their doctrine & worship by ancient shepheards and steps of the

ſheepe, and leade them vnto by-lanes vnto their owne Companies, and murther them: For they haue nothing to proue their doctrine and worſhip but their own authority. Such a Pope, ſo many Cardinals and Biſhops did decree this, and that they cannot erre, therefore wee muſt beleeue it. Heere is all their proofe. But let vs leaue theſe wicked companions, and hearken againe what Chriſt ſayeth now further vnto his beloued Spouſe.

Wee haue ſeene how vehement her deſire is in ſeeking after him, and now he ſheweth how much the ſame pleaſeth him for the commendation which hee giueth vnto her, is drawne from thence. But ſee now vnder what compariſon he praiſeth her. *I haue likened thee my Loue* (ſayeth he) *vnto the troupe of horſes, which is in the Chariots of Pharaoh. Thy cheekes are comely with rowes of ſtones, and thy necke with chaines.* A troupe of horſes, beeing the horſes alſo of a mighty King, and furniſhed for the wars, decked with rowes of precious ſtones vpon their cheekes, as the manner of the Egiptians and other countries was, and chaines of golde about their neckes, was a very goodly ſight, now

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vnto thoſe hee compareth his Spouſe, with her ſpirituall decking and ornaments, as it were rowes of goodly precious ſtones and chaines.

But further, you muſt note, that the troupe of horſes in the Chariots of *Pharaoh* were ſtrong, cheerefull, prompt, and ready to the war: and herein the Church is compared vnto them. It may be ſaid is this holy virgin as a troupe of horſes to the warre? or is ſhe for warre? Yea, ſhe is called the Church militant, that is the Church warring. The enemies againſt whom ſhee warreth are mighty. They be principalities and powers, they bee the rulers of the darkenes of this world. Her warre is againſt all the Diuels of Hell; ſhee ſeeketh vnto Chriſt, and hee hath armed her with ſpirituall armour to vanquiſh them all. Vnto this battell ſhee is prepared, ſhee is adorned, ſhe is prompt and ready, ſhee is full of fortitude and valour; the troupe of horſes in the chariots of King *Pharaoh*, are not comparable vnto her.

They be ſtrong and ſwift, and ready to the battell, but they be but fleſh. They be decked and ſet forth with rowes of preci-

ous ſtones vpon their cheekes, and with gold chaines about their neckes, theſe bee things corruptible. Her ſtrength is ſpirituall, and againſt ſpirituall enemies: her ornaments which are likened vnto rowes of precious ſtones, be alſo ſpirituall. And ſhe is commended for her fortitude which he hath armed her withall, euen that armour of God, as Saint *Paul* calleth it, *Epheſ. 6.* We ſee then that all that long after the Lord Ieſus, looſe not their labour in ſeeking vnto him: for he decketh them with heauenly ornaments, maketh them valiant and ſtrong in his owne power to fight, and to preuayle againſt the mightieſt enemies, euen the Diuels of hell. Let this ſtirre vs vp to ſeeke after him continually. He is our ſtrength and fortitude, hee is our refuge and defence, through him, as Saint *Paul* ſayeth, we are more then conquerours. And vſing the graces and gifts well which he beſtoweth vpon vs, wee ſhall receyue more: for marke what hee promiſeth in the words that follow, *Wee will make thee borders of golde with ſtudds of ſiluer.*

You ſee that theſe words are a promiſe and indeed as it is manifeſt, a promiſe of fur-

further rich ornaments. She is richly decked already, but her decking ſhall bee yet more. She ſhall haue the moſt excellent ornaments of golde and ſiluer, which wrought together doe ſet forth each other. Indeed by theſe, the heauenly graces of the holy Ghoſt are ſignified. But who are they which ſhall make and put vpon her theſe goodly iewels? for hee ſayth not I will make thee, but *Wee will make thee borders of golde, with ſtuds of ſiluer.* Who are they whom the Bridegroome here ioineth with himſelfe in this worke? Are they his friends, the holy Apoſtles & Prophets? Indeed they as inſtruments haue decked and beautified the Church, with the rich & coſtly ornaments which were deliuered vnto them for to put vpon her, and therefore it may after a ſort be ſpoken of them.

But more fully it is to bee vnderſtood of the three perſons in the glorious Trinity, the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghoſt: for all theſe doe decke and beautifie the Church. The Father hath giuen his Sonne to be the Sauiour of the world, and with him, or rather in him all good things. The Sonne hath wrought all righ-

righteouſneſſe, and finiſhed all things which concerne our redemption. And the holy Ghoſt maketh vs partakers of the ſame.

Thus you ſee what a promiſe is made vnto the Church: ſhe hath goodly rich iewels beſtowed vpon her, and more coſtly ſhe ſhall haue, euen vntill ſhe come to the full and perfect beauty, which ſhee ſhall haue in the heauens. Let vs then take comfort in this promiſe, and ſet our hearts conſtantly and zealouſly to ſeeke the Lord, ſeeing it is a thing ſo pleaſing in his ſight, haſt thou receyued ſpirituall decking in thy ſoule? Seeke Chriſt, and thou ſhalt haue more, for heere is a promiſe.

Now the Church ſpeaketh againe, ſetting forth by three compariſons the excellent ſweetnes of Chriſt Ieſus, her moſt louing Spouſe, namely, of *Spikenarde*, *Camphire* and *Myrrhe*. But there is ſome hardneſſe in the firſt ſentence of her ſpeech, which is thus tranſlated. *While the King was at his repaſt, my ſpikenarde gaue the ſmell thereof.* That which is tranſlated *his repaſt*, may bee taken *his ſitting*, for the maner was in banquets to ſit round:

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ſo the word is vſed more generally. The ſenſe may be taken two wayes: for if we take it after our tranſlation, then ſhe ſpeaketh of the King with her banquet heere vpon earth: Chriſt is ſayd to feaſt and banquet with the godly while they liue here. For thus hee ſayeth, *Behold I ſtand at the doore and knocke, if any heare my voyce and open, I will come and ſuppe with him, and hee with mee*, Reu. 3. ver. 20. If wee take it thus, while the King is in his ſitting, that is, while hee yet ſitteth in the heauens, then is there a ſecret compariſon to the ſetting forth of his wonderfull and vnſpeakable ſweetnes. As if ſhee ſhould ſay, euen now while the King my welbeloued is ſitting in the heauens, compaſſed about with his holy Angels, and I heere vpon the earth below, there is a wonderfull diſtance betweene vs, & yet the ſweet ſauour of him commeth vnto mee; yea, I doe ſmell his ſweetneſſe, euen as it were, the precious ſpikenard, Myrrh and Camphyre.

How great is his ſweetnes that cõmeth vnto mee through this diſtance? How ſweet and delightſome ſhall he bee vnto mee, when I ſhall dwell with him

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in the heauens? But it flatly gainesayeth this sense which followeth, if wee take the words, as they be in our English translation, namely thus, my Spikenard gaue the smell thereof. For then the Church commendeth her owne sweetnes, by saying, *My Spikenard gaue the smell thereof*: Doubtlesse she prayseth here the sweetenesse of Christ, and therefore seeing the words doe indifferently beare it, because the letter which is the affixe sometime formeth the adiectiue, I take it to be the righter way to translate it thus: *That which is of Spikenarde gaue the smell thereof.* For as I sayde by *Spikenard*, *Myrrhe*, and *Camphire*, shee setteth foorth how sweete Christ is vnto her.

In the next verse she likeneth him vnto a *bundle of Myrrhe*, and sayeth, *that hee shall remaine between her breasts*, In our speech a bnndle is of some waight; but the word which is heere vsed, signifieth not onely such a bundle, but also any little bunch of flowers or sweetes that are bound together: she compareth him therfore vnto a bunch of Myrrhe, or nosegay (as we call it) such as they vse to make of the sweetest flowers, which the maydens did

did ſet in their boſomes betweene theyr breaſts, and ſo they haue the ſweet ſauour alwayes in their noſe. So this holy Virgin, the Spouſe of Chriſt, feeling her welbeloued to bee ſo ſweet vnto her ſayeth, that hee is as a bunch of ſweet myrrh, and that ſhee will ſet him in her boſome, euen betweene her breaſts, and there hee ſhall remaine, that ſhee may alwayes ſmell his ſweetnes.

In the third place ſhe ſayeth, *Hee is to her as a cluſter of Camphire, or of Cyprus, a very ſweet thing*: and euen as the ſweeteſt of that kinde, which grew in the vines of Engedie. Is Chriſt Ieſus as the Bride here ſayeth of him? Is he ſo repleniſhed with ſweetneſſe, that euen from the high heauens hee perfumeth the whole world with moſt excellent ſweet ſmell? How is it thē that the Spouſe ſayeth, it is vnto her? Doe none ſmell this ſweetnes but ſhe? Doubtleſſe the Church only hath the right ſenſe how ſweet the Lord is. Shee euen all the Elect, the redeemed and ſanctified in Chriſt, doe feele the free remiſſion of ſins and reconciliation to God, from whence ariſeth a ſweete peace and ſpirituall ioy: through faith ſhe apprehēdeth him who is her ſan-

ſanctifier, hee is fixed in her heart, euen in her breſt, and ſo he maketh her continually to feele his ſweete ſauour. The children of this world doe ſmel the ſweet ſauour of many earthly things, and doe very much delight therein: but the ſweetnes of Chriſt they doe not ſmell. This is no maruell: for let the ſunne ſhine neuer ſo bright, yet hee that is blinde perceyueth it not. And let him that is without the ſenſe of ſmelling come among ſweet ſauours, yet hee ſmelleth noehing. The Lord Ieſus is preached, and as it were the boxe of precious oyntment powred forth into the world, ſo that the whole ayre is as it were, perfumed with his ſweet ſauour: but many are ſo ſtuffed with euill ſauours, euen with the ſtinking ſauours of carnall luſts, which yet ſeeme moſt delightſome vnto them, as that they cannot ſmell any ſpirituall ſweetneſſe. When the faithfull are euen rauiſhed in mind with the ſauour of him that commeth vnto them, thoſe other are nothing moued: They ſauour the things which are of the fleſh, and not the things which are of God. Here is a place then, by which euery one of vs may trye himſelfe, whether we bee

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in the right way or not: you ſee plainely what the mother of all Gods children ſayeth, how ſweete Chriſt is vnto her, aud how her heart is euen ſet vpon him, ſhee fixeth him in her breaſt, that ſhee may continually be refreſhed with his ſweetenesſe: This is the ſtate of euery true Chriſtian ſoule. Then if thy heart be ſet vpon the cares and pleaſures of this worrld, if thou bee earthly minded, bewayle thine eſtate; for what ſhall it auayle thee for to boaſt of Chriſtianity, when thou ſhalt bee found to bee but a counterfeit Chriſtian? But if thou findeſt that being ſtinking & loathſome to thy ſelfe, and that the Lord Ieſus doth perfume thee with his ſweetneſſe, ſo that thy heart for loue of him deſpiſeth vncleane luſts and carnall pleaſurs, aſpiring vnto the heauens where thy treaſure, and thy ioy is, then art thou moſt happy, It is with thee as the holy ſpouſe here ſpeaketh.

And know this that if thou wilt fixe Chriſt, euen as it were a bunch of ſweet Myrrhe in thy breaſt, thou haſt none other way to doe it, but *by meditation in the holy word of God day and night*: Pſal. 1. For why is it that *Dauid* ſayth of the holy word

word of God, that *it is more to bee desired then golde, yea then much fine golde, sweeter then the honey, or the honey combe*, Psal. 19. But that through the word hee felte all the sweetnes from Christ, deriued vnto him.

The words in themselues can bee but words, and not so rich, nor so sweet: but as they bee the conduit pypes, or as it were certaine vessels or instruments, by which the heauenly riches are conuayed into our hearts, they be more to be desired then gold, and sweeter then honey. We apprehend Christ Iesus, & are engraffed into him through a true and liuely faith: *That faith* (as the holy Apostle teacheth) *commeth by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Rom. 10. It is not then possible for these men to feele any sweet smell of Christ Iesus our blessed Lord, which feele no sweetnes in the liuely oracles of God: They may haue certaine fantasies and imaginations: but as for any power of Christ, for mortification of sinne, or for quickning vnto vertues, there is none at all. They bee not perfumed, Christ is not vnto them as a cluster of Camphire: or as a bunch of Myrrhe in their bosome:

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neyther doth his ſweetneſſe come vnto them, as Spikenard. Let vs beloued, bee careſull to differ from ſuch, by feeling that which the Bride ſayeth here.

In the next wordes the Bridegroome ſpeaketh againe, commending and prayſing, and that very highly, the beauty of his Bride. *Behold thou art fayre, my Loue,* (ſayeth hee) *Behold thou art fayre, thine eyes are as the doues.* It is the whole deſire of the Church to be well fauoured, comly and beautifull in the eyes of Chriſt. If hee accept of her, it is all in all, what can ſhee deſire more? A ſingular ioy it muſt needes be then vnto her, to vnderſtand for certainty that ſhee is beautiſull indeed in his ſight. And therefore the Lord to cheere her, doth pronounce in manner, as you haue heard, that ſhee is fayre, And now for the manner of his ſpeech, he ſayeth, *Behold thou art fayre, &c.* The Scripture vſeth this word *behold*, when it will ſtirre vp the mindes of men to conſider ſome rare, ſome excellent or wonderfull matter. As *Behold a virgin ſhall bee with child, &c. Behold the day of the Lord, &c.* So then by this manner of ſpeech, Chriſt here declareth, that the Church his ſpouſe

is exceeding beautifull in his ſight. Then further, to amplifie the matter, ſee how hee doubleth his ſpeech, ſaying, *Behold thou art fayre, my loue, behold thou art fayre.*

This is to ſhew that her beauty indeede doth excell. for it doth expreſſe a vehemency of mind, when the ſpeech is ſo doubled. If we ſpeake of a man which wee take to be ſtarke nought, wee do not if wee vtter our mind to any, ſatiſfie our ſelues by ſaying, he is naught: but wee will ſay, hee is naught, hee is naught. And ſo by doubling the ſpeech, wee would haue known that we take him to be excee ding naught, euen ſuch as wee can hardly expreſſe with words. In like maner when wee will expreſſe the rare excellency of any thing, wee vſe to ſay, it is excellent, it is excellent. Euen ſo our Lord Ieſus Chriſt ſayth heere to his Church, *Behold thou art fayre my loue, behold thou art fayre*: declaring thereby that ſhee is not onely fayre, but wonderfull fayre and glorious in his ſight. Let the world iudge of her how they will, eſteeming her as baſe and deformed (for the world cannot behold the ſpirituall beauty and heauenly ornaments

ments) yet ſhee is precious and goodly before the Lord. Wee may triumph in this, euen ſo many as vnfainedly loue the Lord Ieſus: that wee are ſo comely and pleaſing in his eyes. But it may bee ſayde is there not a lumpe of ſinne? Are there not many foule ſpots and deformities in the moſt faithfull ſoules while they liue heere? Is that which is polluted and defiled with ſinne, beautifull and comely in the eyes of the Lord Ieſus? Can any thing be ſo fayre vnto him which is full of blemiſhes? To this I anſwere, as before I anſwered, that the Lord Ieſus beholdeth the vertues and comely graces wherewith his beloued Spouſe is decked: hee doth not regard her ſpots and deformities, *becauſe hee will waſh them all away, and make her a glorious Church to himſelfe, not hauing ſpot or wrincke.* Epheſ. 5. What may more encourage vs then this to come vnto Chriſt? The Diuell will tell thee thus? What doeſt thou ſeeking after Chriſt? hee is high, beautifull and glorious, he is moſt holy and pure. Thou doeſt but loſe thy labour, hee will not regard thee which art ſinnefull, ſpotted and deformed. Wouldeſt thou bee ioyned vnto him:

Ceaſe from calling vpon him, vnles thou mighteſt be better welcom vnto him. To repell all ſuch temptations of the enemy: Remember what the Lord ſayeth heere vnto his Church, *Behold thou art fayre my Loue, behold thou art fayre.* For looke what hee ſpeaketh to the whole Church, hee ſpeaketh vnto euery faithfull ſoule. Is there faith, is there repentance, is there true loue, zeale, humility and meekenes? Although there be remnants of corruption, and a mixture of diuers infirmities, yet this is not taken away, *Beholde thou art fayre my loue, behold thou art fayre.* Finde out then thoſe ornamenrs in thy ſelfe, and though they bee not perfect or full, yet be ſure they be in truth, aud come boldly vnto him, ſo louing a Sauiour, and reioyce in his loue.

That clauſe which followeth, doth yet further extoll her beauty, when hee ſayeth, *Thine eyes are like the doues.* The chiefe beauty is in the face: for let there be neuer ſo good ſhape and proportion, if there be not a well fauoured face, all is loſt. Againe, in the face, the eye is very much, eyther for beauty or deformity. Now the doue hath a goodly eye, & therfore

fore in great commendation of his ſpouſe Chriſt ſayth, *That her eyes are like doues eyes.* Furthermore, the eye of the Doue is ſimple and chaſt: and therefore in this compariſon Chriſt doth beſides the beauty ſet forth alſo the chaſt ſimplicity of his Spouſe. The chaſtitie of virgins is much to be commended, and a thing requiſite for all Chriſtians to poſſeſſe their veſſel in holines. This I ſpeake of the bodily chaſtitie. But there is alſo a ſpirituall chaſtity, in which the church is ſayde to be a chaſte and pure virgin vnto Chriſt: as there is a ſpirituall whoredome often complained of, and condemned in the ſcriptures: then as in marriage the Bridegroome doth much delight in the chaſtity and ſimplicity of his Bride: ſo the faithful ſoule being married vnto Chriſt, there is chaſtity required. Shee may not follow after others, or commit whoredom with them: but ſhee muſt keepe her loue, her faith, and her affection whole and entire towards him alone.

They that embraee the doctrines and religions of men, worſhipping ſtocks & ſtones, yea diuels, haue not doues eyes, they be not chaſt, but doe commit abomi-

nable whoredome, as the Word of God doth charge them. *Such as embrace this world are called Adulterers and Adultereſſes.* Iam. 4. ver. 4. then their eyes be not as the eyes of the doue. They make riches their God: for they haue ſet their hearts vpon them. And therefore Saint *Paul* ſayeth, that *Couetouſnes is idolatrie*, Col. 3. verſe 5. Hee then that will bee beautifull in the ſight of the Lord, muſt haue doues eyes: hee muſt with the ſingle eye of faith worſhip him in Spirite and truth, euen as hee preſcribeth in his holy Word: hee muſt loue him and ſtay vpon him, and not vpon riches.

What then are the eyes of the church? That indeed may bee demaunded, *The eye* (as our Sauiour teacheth Math. 6.) *Is the light of the body.* And without the eye there is nothing but darkenes in the body. The eye then of the ſoule is the light of the ſoule, and that is a true and liuely faith. Where faith is not, there is nothing but darkenes, and by faith wee behold God. But *without faith*, (as it is written, Heb. 11. *It is vnpoſſible to pleaſe God.* The delight then which our Lord God taketh in his ſeruants is in the beauty of this

this eye of faith. Let vs then labour dayly for encreaſe of the holy faith, that wee may be more and more beautifull: for the beauty thereof ſhall neuer decay. Thus wee ſee how the Bridegroome hath prayſed his Bride, and now ſhee rendereth the like to him. *Behold thou art fayre my welbeloued and pleaſant, alſo our bed is greene.* It is very true that the Bride is fayre, hee telleth ſo which cannot lie: but ſhee reſteth not in her owne beauty, which neyther ſhee hath of her ſelfe, neyther yet is it the greateſt. For firſt of all, this is cleare, that ſhee hath all her beauty and ornaments from him, It is he that *waſheth her, and maketh her glorious*, Epheſ. 5. Againe, though the beauty and glory of the heauenly new Ieruſalem bee exceeding great, as it is ſet forth, Reu. 21. yet the glory of the Bridegroome exceedeth it far for hee is the fountaine of all glory and beauty. And therefore ſhee returneth this prayſe vpon him, that hee indeed is fayre and comely. Who can ſet forth the glory of Chriſt? who can deſcribe his beauty and comelines? There is in him, or as Saint *Paul* ſayeth, *There dwelleth in him all fulneſſe of the Godhead bodily*, Col. 2.

verſ. 9. All the faithfull euen the ſanctified doe glorie in their beauty: but yet ſo, *as they know they haue all from him, and ſo indeede as they glory onely in him*, 1. Cor. 1. verſ. 31. *Behold thou art fayre my Welbeloued and comely.* Vnto this fountain then, who is made vnto vs of God, wiſedome, righteouſneſſe, ſanctification, and redemption, we are to haue recourſe. This moſt glorious beautie of the Lord is not ſeene, nor felt of any but the faithfull. The world hath no benefite thereby: and therfore the World hath no ioy nor delight to praiſe him.

Were it not for the moſt excellent beutie of Chriſt, the church had beene in euill caſe. Then ſhe addeth, *Alſo our bed is green.* She is a virgin, and yet ſhe is the mother of all Gods children: *for Ieruſalem from aboue* (ſaith *Paul*) *is free, which is mother of vs all*, Gal. 4. ver. 26. So many as haue God their Father, haue the church their mother. When ſhe ſaith then, *our bedde is greene*, ſhee ſpeaketh of procreation in that heauenlie and ſpirituall birth. The greeneneſſe doth ſignifie flouriſhing and freſh ſpringing of thoſe goodlie plants, which are borne of God.

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I need not ſtand here to handle this doctrine of regeneration, how the elect are begotten of God in the new birth, by the immortall ſeede, euen by the word of truth: and that this birth is in Chriſt: for wee often deale in thoſe points, therefore a word or two of that which remaineth.

The beames of our houſe are Cedars, the rafters are of Firrhe. Whether this bee the ſpeech of the Bride alone, as it may ſeem, or whether it be vttered by them both, it is not much materiall to bee ſtood vpon. Here is commended their houſe which they dwell in: and the commendation is from the matter which it is built of, euen Cedars and Firrhe. Theſe kindes of wood are durable and commodious otherwiſe: That Word which is tranſlated Rafters, is rather to be taken for galleries, or goodlie walkes, which were wont to bee vpon the tops of Kings pallaces. But what is this pallace? It is to be taken for the heauens, in which they ſhal for euer dwel together: I ſuppoſe rather that it is meant of an houſe, while ſhe is yet in the world: what houſe then? ſurely the Church her ſelfe is the Temple of the liuing God. Euerie faith-

faithfull ſoule is the habitation of Chriſt. And therefore the holy Prophet in the Pſalme, calleth vpon men to open the dores of their heart to receiue in Chriſt: *Liſt vp your heades, yee gates, and bee yee lift vp yee euerlaſting doores, and the King of glory ſhall come in*, Pſal. 24. And thus wee haue had, as I may ſay, one Song betweene theſe Louers. Let vs pray.

THE

The third Sermon.

CHAP. II.

1 *I am the rose of the fielde, and the Lillie of the valleyes.*

2 *Like a lillie among the thornes, so is my loue among the daughters.*

3 *Like as the apple tree among the trees of the forrest, so is my welbeloued among the sonnes: vnder his shadow I had delight, and sate downe, and his fruit was sweete vnto my mouth.*

4 *Hee brought mee into the house of wine and loue was his banner ouer me.*

5 *Stay mee with flagons, and comfort mee with apples, for I am sicke of loue.*

6 *His left hand is vnder my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*

7 *I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem, by the roes, and by the hindes of the field, that yee stirre not vp, nor wake my loue vntill shee please.*

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IF this bee called the Song of Songs, not onely for the excellency, but also as ſome ſuppoſe, it may becauſe it doth containe in it diuers ſongs: then haue wee finiſhed one Song in the former Chapter, and here wee haue another in this Chapter. The Bride did beginne the former, and now let vs ſee which of them doth beginne this Song. The Pronoun (*ani*) which ſignifieth in our tongue, *I*, is common both to man and woman, as I man, or I woman, ſo that it cannot bee decided by the forme of ſpeech, whether of them ſayeth, *I am the roſe of Sharon, and the Lillie of the vallyes*. Moreouer, the Lord Ieſus and his Church are both of them ſweet, fayre, comely, and beautifull: yea ſo ſweet, and ſo exceeding beautifull, that all the ſweeteſt roſes, and whiteſt lillies in the world are not comparable vnto them.

If hee bee called the Roſe and the Lillie, it is moſt true he is ſo. And if the Church be likened vnto them, it is a fitte compariſon. Can it not then (may ſom ſay) be gathered which of them ſpeaketh this? yes verily it is out of doubt, that Chriſt ſpeaketh this of himſelfe, ſaying, *I*

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I am the roſe of Sharon, and the lillie of the valleyes. Hee doth in this ſet forth his owne prayſe. the Church doth not ſpeak it: for then ſhee ſhould prayſe her ſelfe, which is not meete. If you will ſay, may not the Church prayſe her ſelfe, how then doth Chriſt prayſe himſelfe? This is eaſily aunſwered: Chriſt Ieſus is the fountaine of all goodneſſe, he is worthy all prayſe, and may rightly prayſe himſelfe, as hee doth in the Goſpell ſay, *That he is the bread of life, & he is the light of the world.* The Church hath all her holineſſe and beauty from Chriſt, ſhee may not prayſe her ſelfe. *No man is to prayſe himſelfe*, Pro. 17, v. 2. If any man ſhall reply, that the Church did in the former Chapter prayſe her ſelfe, ſaying, *That ſhee is blacke, but yet comely, &c.* I anſwer that ſhee was forced thereunto, leaſt by thoſe that take occaſion to deprave her, the weake might ſtumble, & be made to deſpiſe her. Saint *Paul* (as you know) was conſtrained to prayſe himſelfe, leaſt his doctrine ſhould bee defaced, 1. Cor. 11. The falſe Apoſtles which ſought all occaſions to diſcredite him, did force him thereunto, and hee ſayeth, *That hee dealt therein after*

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the manner of fooles. Then wee may ſee, that as the Bride began the former ſong, ſetting forth the excellency of her Bridegroome, and her deſire to be with him, as the Author, and very fountaine of all her ioy and happineſſe: ſo heere the Bridegroome beginneth, firſt prayſing himſelfe and then he commendeth his dearely beloued Spouſe. Heere bee a couple prayſed, euen a Bridegroome, and his bride, both of them excellent, fayre, ſweet, goodly and pure: yea they reſemble each the other for he is as the Lillie, and ſhee is ſo likewiſe. But hee is prayſed firſt, becauſe hee is the very fountaine, all fulneſſe of ſweet things is in him, and from him ſhe receyueth all her goodneſſe, beauty, and purity. Without him, what are the children of *Adam*? Are not al defiled, are not all corrupt and abominable: yea doe not all lye vnder ſinne, euen ouerwhelmed in the ſtinking mudde of vncleanes: then that the church is a Lillie, ſhe hath it from him, who ſayeth: *I am the Lillie* of the valleyes

And marke how the Lord is ſet forth vnto vs by two goodly flowers, *the roſe, and the lillie.* They be ſweet, and they bee beau-

beautifull: *Salomon in all his royalty not like them*, Mat. 6. So our Lord is holy, he is pure, he is innocent, hee is full of all beauty and glorie. And it is to bee noted, that hee compareth himselfe to the goodlieſt roſe and the ſweeteſt, and to the faireſt Lillie: for hee ſayeth, *I am the roſe of Sharon*, which was a goodly fruitfull place, mentioned in diuers places of ſcripture, in which, as it appeareth by this place, the roſe did excell: and the Lillies of the vallyes is the fayreſt. Behold heere what a fauour wee haue to come vnto: how comfortable and delightſome is hee how ſoft and gentle? How is hee to bee coueted, to bee loued and embraced: and why doth hee publiſh this prayſe of himſelfe, but to draw vs vnto him: Why are wee ſo dull hearted, and ſo negligent, in ſeeking to bee ioyned vnto him, What is there vnder the ſunne that ſhould ſtay vs from ſuch a ſauiour. Lord make vs to behold thy glorious beauty, and to ſmell this ſweet ſauour, that we may come vnto thee.

Let vs come to the next verſe, *Like a lillie among the thornes, ſo is my loue among the daughters of men.*

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This praiſe the Lord giueth of his church; but as I ſaide before, that ſhe is as the faire, ſweet, and ſoft lillie, ſhe hath it from him: *Of his fulneſſe wee all receyue euen grace for grace*, Iohn 1. And therefore when hee had ſaid, I am the lillie of the valleis, hee addeth by and by, that his loue is as the Lilly. She is made righteous in him, ſhe is cloathed with his innocency and obedience: ſhe is made faire and beautifull in him. But we muſt obſerue how he ſetteth her forth, heere by a compariſon, which conſiſteth of four *termini*, as they cal them, the *Lillie*, *the Thornes*, *his Loue*, *and the Daughters*.

The ſenſe may bee taken two wayes: as firſt, ſome haue taken it that hee ſetteth forth the ſtate and condition of the church in which ſhe is here in the world touching afflictions, As to ſay like the ſoft lilly which groweth among the thornes, is pricked of them: ſo my ſpouſe, my loue is pricked, and afflicted of the Daughters among whom ſhe dwelleth. This is a true doctrine, for there be ſundry aſſemblies of diuers religions in the World, and euery one doth challenge to be the true church, and ſo al take vpon them to be the daugh-

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ters of the moſt high, and ſo the title is giuen vnto them, though they bee not ſo in deed. All theſe doe hate and perſecute the true Church, and are euen like thornes in her ſide.

Thus I ſay, ſome haue exponnded this place, and it is true, but not the ſenſe of this place. It is not the meaning of Chriſt here to ſhew the affliction of his Spouſe, or the hard condition that ſhe is in, but to magnifie her excellent beauty. For the compariſon is made thus. The Churches of Idolaters make a goodly external ſhew and there ſeemeth to be a great pompe & glory, ſo that to themſelues they ſeeme to be beautifull and goodly: but my loue excelleth them as farre as the ſweet white lillie excelleth the thornes. So that this word *among* is taken in compariſon. Set a Lillie in compariſon among Bryers, & thornes, and ſee how it doth excell them: ſo doth the true Church excell all aſſemblies of Worſhippers in the world. Shee is baſe and deſpiſed in the eyes of the world, as hauing no ornaments; but in the eyes of the Lord is ſhe full of ſpirituall beauty, & decked with heauenly iewels. Contrariwiſe, thoſe counterfeyte

daughters be very gorgeous and trimme to the outward eye, they bee very pompous and ſhining in the fleſh: but in the eyes of the Lord, they bee but as thornes. Behold here the difference. Pretious in the eyes of the Lord is his holy church: but all other aſſemblies, are but as thorns, meet for the fire.

The Bride hearing this commendation giuen of her by her Bridegroome, breaketh forth into his prayſe, which ſhee doeth alſo ſet forth by a compariſon, ſaying, *As the apple tree among the trees of the forreſt, ſo is my welbeloued among the ſonnes*: As he ſet forth her prayſe, that ſhee excelleth all the daughters, as far as the Lillie excelleth the thorns: ſo ſhe commendeth him, that hee in dignity ſurmounteth all the ſonnes, as farre as the Appletree, goeth beyond the common trees of the forreſt. It may bee demaunded, who are thoſe ſonnes with whom Chriſt is compared? Take them whom you wil among all creatures in heauen and earth, hee farre excelleth them all.

The Angels are great and glorious, but he is greater, Heb. 1. *He is farre beyond all principality and power, and might, and dominati-*

on,

on, and euery name that is named, not onely in this World, but in that which is to come, Eph. 1. Right well therefore doth the Church compare him to excell all other, as far as the apple tree excelleth the common trees of the forreſt. And marke now how ſhe proſecuteth this Allegorie, ſhewing what worthy benefites ſhee receyueth from this goodly apple tree. Shee includeth them all vnder two, his ſhadow, and his fruite. *Vnder his ſhadow* (ſayeth ſhe) *I had delight and ſate downe, and his fruite was ſweet vnto my mouth.* The ſhadow of a tree (as all men know) is comfortable, & doth refreſh thoſe that are parched with the boyling heate of the ſunne. The Church is vnder hote perſecutions: there be alſo fiery temptations of the Diuell, & burning heate of guiltineſſe: for ſinne in the conſciences of all the elect, vntill they be refreſhed by Chriſt. Wherefore hee ſayth, *Come vnto mee all ye that trauel and bee heauie laden, and I will refreſh you,* Mat. 11. Vnder his ſhadow ſhee taketh delight: in him ſhe findeth reſt & peace, and therefore ſhe ſitteth down, and remayneth vnder his ſhadow. A matter worthy to be noted how the faithfull ha-

uing found the Lord Ieſus, and beeing comforted and refreſhed by him, do hold themſelues cloſe vnder his ſhadow, they make their abode there, and ſeeke no further. They finde that in him there is a ful ſufficiency to refreſh them in perſecution, and to quench and coole all the heate of their ſinnes. Farre otherwiſe it is with idolaters, and ſuch as worſhip falſe Gods. When they haue done all that they can, they are not ſatisfied, they finde no eaſe, nor no way to take away the ſting of conſcience, *They multiplie their ſorrowes* as the Prophet ſayeth, Pſal. 16. They do puniſh and afflict themſelues many waies, ſeeking all meanes to make ſome ſatisfaction for their ſinns, they coole the burning heate of their guilty conſcience: but when they haue wearied themſelues, they can finde no eaſe, nor no reſt, for that is onely to bee found vnder the ſhadow of this apple tree, where the holy Spouſe taketh her delight, and is ſet downe. Shall wee not then ſit downe onely vnder the ſhadow of Chriſt?

And then ſhee ſayeth, *That his fruite is ſweet vnto her mouth.* She doth not from this fruitfull tree receyue onely the com-

comfortable refreſhing ſhadow, but alſo eateth of the apples which he beareth: and the ſame (as ſhee affirmeth) are ſweete and pleaſent to her taſte. What theſe apples are, I need not ſtand to ſhew: the faithfull ſoule feedeth vpon Chriſt, and is nouriſhed with all heauenly food, euen the fruites which he beareth. And what is wanting in him? *Hee is made vnto vs of God* (as Saint *Paul* ſayeth) *wiſedome, righteouſneſſe, ſanctification, and redemption*, 1. Cor. 1. The holy Church is by him alone fully ſatisfied with all good things, which ſhee doth heere declare, not onely by this Allegory of an apple tree, but alſo by a banquet: for ſhee addeth: *The King brought me into the banqueting houſe, and loue was the banner ouer mee.* It is in our Engliſh tranſlation, The King brought mee into the Wine-celler. The word in the Hebrew text is, the houſe of Wine. To take this houſe of Wine for a Wine-celler, is not fitte: for it is not the order, nor comely that a King ſhould leade his Spouſe into a Wine-celler. Nay, the houſe of Wine is that which wee call a banqueting houſe. The great Kings and Noble Princes of this worlde doe vſe

to entertaine one another in ſumptuous and royall banqueting houſes, in which they do ſet before thē all the dainty things which can be gotten for money. This moſt high and glorious King of all kings, bringeth his Loue, his Queene, his deare Spouſe into his banqueting houſe, which doth excell all the banqueting houſes of earthly Kings.

The coſtly things which they doe banquet withall, are but traſh and droſſe, and beggarly ſcraps, in compariſon of thoſe heauenly dainties with which hee doth entertaine his Spouſe. Here is therfore a moſt rich and precious banquett mentioned: Here is that which is written: *The Kingdome of heauen is like to a King that married his ſonne*, Math. 22. *Happie and bleſſed are all they, which are called to this Supper*, Reu. 19. ver. 9. But it may be ſayde, how commeth ſhee into this houſe of Wine? And how doth ſhe taſte of theſe heauenly dainties? You muſt marke how ſhee ſayeth, that the King brought her into the houſe of wine: none can enter in thither, except the Lord Ieſus by his ſpirit do leade them in. *No man*, (ſayeth he) *commeth vnto mee, except the Father*

Father that ſent me draw him, Iohn 6, We cannot be partakers of the heauenly treaſures which are in Chriſt, but through the operation of the holy Ghoſt, as Saint *Paul* teacheth at large, 1. Cor. 2. And the Church doth taſte of this banquet, ſpiritually through faith; She doth ſo feed vpon Chriſt crucified, eating his fleſh, and drinking his bloud. What good thing then doth ſhe want? Is not alfulnes in Chriſt? We need not doubt, but that here is righteouſneſſe, here is life, here is peace, here is ioy, euen vnſpeakable and glorious, as the holy Apoſtle Saint *Peter* ſpeaketh, 1. *Pet.* 1. ver. 8. And it is a moſt ſpeciall matter which ſhee addeth, ſaying. *And loue was his banner ouer me.*

It is the vſe and manner in the wars, that an Enſigne or banner is ſpread, and diſplayed: and ſo the bands and companies of ſouldiers are aſſembled and gathered together each company vnto their owne colours, The Church vpon earth, is a Church militant, and hath a great captaine, a mighty Emperour, vnder whoſe conduct ſhee doth warre and fight the good fight of faith. His banner is diſplaied, euen to aſſemble and gather together

vnto him all his Bands and Companies: And this banner, as ſhee ſayeth, which is thus ſpread ouer her, is loue. All the faithfull, euen al the choſen of God are drawn vnto Chriſt by his loue. What loue is like vnto his, *Who hath giuen himſelfe to death for vs when wee were his enemies* ? Rom. 5. *Who hath waſhed vs in his bloud.* Reu. 1. And what is the true and liuely faith, which bringeth men vnto God, but euen to apprehend his fauor, and to know that hee hath loued vs, and giuen his owne ſonne, euen by his precious death and bloudſhedding, to worke our redemption? All men will confeſſe that this was a ſingular loue in Chriſt: but yet euery man is not drawne thereby to one again with the true loue, of which hee himſelfe doth ſpeake in the Goſpell, ſaying, *If any loue mee hee will keepe my Word,* Iohn 14. 23. And in the ſame Chapter hee ſayeth *Hee that hath my commandements and keepeth them, is he that loueth me*: but onely they which feele that the ſame Loue of Chriſt reacheth vnto themſelues: For the loue of Chriſt is the Enſigne ſpreade by which hee draweth all his choſen vnto him: and no one is drawne, but they one-

onely, ouer whome the ſame enſigne is diſplayed. For marke this how ſhe ſayeth *Loue was his banner ouer me.* The loue of Chriſt is preached, and ſo the banner is after a ſort diſplaied ouer al that do heare what hee hath done for mankind: notwithſtanding no man is drawne, ſauing ſuch as are aſſured that he hath loued thē: for loue is his banner ouer them. They haue the full aſſurance of faith, that hee ſuffered death to make ſatisfaction for their ſinnes, that in him they are iuſtified, and ſanctified, and ſhal bee glorified. *His ſpirite doth witneſſe together with their ſpirite, that they bee the ſonnes of God.* Rom. 8. Theſe doe indeed loue him againe: Theſe are enflamed with a moſt vehement deſire to come vnto him, and they ioy and delight in him continually. Yea I may ſay rightly, that there are not any which doe worſhippe and ſerue the Lord with any acceptable ſeruice or worſhippe, but onely thoſe ouer whome the banner of his loue is ſpred.

For vndoubtedly, that which proceedeth not of loue, is but as a duetie, which is forced, it commeth not in his right kinde, It is wrought for ſome ſiniſter

niſter reſpects, or wrongforth by a ſeruile feare. *Without faith* (ſayeth the holy Ghoſt, Heb. 11) *it is vnpoſſible to pleaſe God.* What is the reaſon of that? The reaſon is manifeſt, that vntill a man by faith doe finde and know that the Lord loueth him, hee cannot loue God.

Wee loue him (ſayth S. *Iohn*) *becauſe hee loued vs firſt*, 1. Iohn 4. And not louing God, he cannot offer any thing vnto him, which is acceptable and pleaſing in his ſight.

The Lord God is delighted onely with that which proceedeth from a franke hart which ſincerely loueth him. And as S. *Paul* ſayeth, Galat. 4. *Faith worketh by charity.* Behold then, the fountaine of all holy duties in man towards his Lord God, euen loue, and the ſame wrought by the banner of his loue ſpread over vs, as the holy Spouſe heere ſpeaketh. Vntill wee doe behold this banner in deed diſplayed ouer vs, wee lie vtterly as dead blockes, touching any holy action: A man may force his hands, his feet, his tongue, yea euen his mind alſo vnto the doing of ſuch things as are required: but all is nothing vntil the loue of Chriſt conſtrain vs: when

that

that banner is ſpread ouer vs, then are we drawne, then wee runne. *Simon Ioanna loueſt thou mee? feede my ſheepe. loueſt thou mee, feede my lambs.* Iohn 1.21. And looke what Paul did, hee ſayeth *The loue of God conſtraineth vs*, 2. Cor. 5. 14. And we read of the woman in the goſpell, which waſhed the feet of the Lord with teares, and wiped them with the hayres of her head: From whence proceedeth all this? Was it not from hence, as Chriſt ſayeth, that ſhe loued much. And why did ſhe loue much? Hee alſo ſheweth, when hee ſayeth: *for many ſinnes are forgiuen her.* Shee had felt the banner of his loue ſpredde ouer her, in forgiuing her many ſinnes, and this did draw her to loue him exceedingly. Then may wee learne from this ſpeech of the Church, what is the chiefe duety of the Miniſters of the Goſpell, namely, to ſpread this banner of his loue vnto the people: yea, euen to publiſh and lay open the riches of his loue towardes mankind, in offering himſelfe to be a ranſom for the ſinnes of the world, to draw men out of eternall miſery, vnto a moſt happy and bleſſed life.

And then if you will loue the Lorde Ieſus

Ieſus indeed, ſeeke to apprehend his loue. Euery man that taketh a wife and a right courſe, muſt come vnto his with the holy Spouſe, *Loue was his banner ouer mee.* For if Chriſt by faith doe leade him into the banqueting houſe, euen to make him taſte of all thoſe heauenly dayntis, which be in himſelfe, ſo that hee feele, that through his Croſſe his ſinnes are defaced, hee is made righteous and innocent, he is deliuered from the tyranny of the Diuell, from death and endles miſery, and made heyre of euerlaſting glory: then doth he make him behold the banner of his loue ſpread ouer him: and then is the heart of that man ſet on fire with a burning loue towardes the Lord Ieſus Chriſt: hee ſeeketh after him, as after his chiefe treaſure and hearts ſolace: he delighteth to heare his voyce: hee taketh pleaſure in his commaundements: hee doth all his endeauor to ſet forth his glory and prayſe, yea all fruites of loue doe follow, euen of a moſt earneſt loue.

But that will appeare more by the next words, in which ſhe cryeth out, *Stay me with flagons, and comfort me with apples, for I am ſicke of loue.*

Behold

Behold heere a wonderfull effect of thoſe former things which hee ſpake of: She compared Chriſt vnto an appletree, vnder whoſe ſhadow ſhee tooke delight, and ſate downe, and his fruit was ſweete vnto her mouth. *He brought her* (as ſhee ſayeth) *vnto the houſe of wine, and loue was his banner ouer her.* Hereupon her heart is ſo rauiſhed with loue towards him, that ſhe is loue-ſicke, and ready to ſound therwith, and cryeth out to haue them to ſtay her with flagons, and to comfort her with apples. Here is a maruellous paſſion of loue. The ſimilitude is drawn from hence when a virgin is betrothed, and through the vehemency of her loue towards her Spouſe, is ſicke and ſoundeth. A greater or a more vehement, or paſſionate loue there cannot be. By this therefore the ſpirituall and holy loue of the Church is figured: for the faithfull ſoule taſting the ſweetneſs of thoſe apples, and of that heauenly wine, hath ſuch a deſire of Chriſt, as cannot with any words be expreſſed. She ſayth, ſhee is ſicke of loue, and as it were ſwounding. And marke this well, as a ſpeciall point, where ſhe ſeeketh helpe, & how ſhee is ſupported.

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The ſweetneſſe of thoſe Apples, which ſhee taſted, and of the precious Wine, brought her into this paſſion, yet her appetite and deſire of them is not therby diminiſhed, but ſhee deſireth them ſo much the more. Shee calleth for flagons of that wine, to comfort and refreſh her ſpirites, & to haue thoſe ſame apples ſtrowed vnder her, that ſhee may bee refreſhed with their ſweet ſent.

The faithfull whome Chriſt leadeth into the houſe of wine, euen vnto the banquet of heauenly things, doe not receyue the ſame in full meaſure, but as it were a taſte is giuen them by ſmall drops, which Saint *Paul* calleth *The firſt fruits of the ſpirite*, Rom. 8. v. 23. And, *the earneſt of the Spirit*, Eph. 1. Now by theſe drops they doe perceyue, what a wonderfull ſweetneſſe there is in thoſe heauenly things, & hereupon they bee euen as it were, ſicke with loue, and ready to ſwound with the deſire of hauing more: for you ſee that ſhee cryeth out for more: It is the wil of *GOD*, that his redeemed ſhall not while they liue heere, be filled with thoſe precious things which be in Chriſt, *in whome there is all fulnes, and of whoſe fulnes wee all re-*

receyue, Iohn 1.16. But a meaſure is diſtilled into their ſoules, as it were by little creuiſes, and ſo they doe ſtill hunger & thirſt after them exeeedingly. But vnto whom doth ſhee crie out for the flagons, and for whoſe ſweet apples? Shee ſeemeth not to direct her words vnto Chriſt: for ſhee ſpeaketh in the plurall number, and not vnto ſome one. Verily, ſhee calleth vnto thoſe, into whoſe hands Chriſt hath committed theſe treaſures to deliuer vnto her. And who be they? Euen his faithfull ſeruants, the Prophets and Apoſtles, and all holy Teachers. For by the Miniſtery of theſe, the Lord hath deliuered vnto his Church all thoſe heauenly dainties. They haue alwayes fed her: and therfore ſhee doth rightly direct her ſpeech vnto them, not as vnto the Authors, but as vnto the miniſters of thoſe things: for ſhee knoweth that they bee wholy and altogether from her welbeloued: *They bee but as ſtewards and diſpoſers of the miſteries of God*, 1.Cor.4.1.

I neede not ſtand to make proofe of this, which al that haue any ſparke of true knowledge do confeſſe. But let vs obſerue heere ſome things for our inſtruction.

on. As firſt, what is the cauſe that fewe are ſicke, and ready to ſwound with the loue of Chriſt? Or that ſo fewe in compariſon of the multitude, doe call for the flagons of the heauenly wine, and for the ſweete apples? We ſee that almoſt all doe ſeeke after golde and ſiluer, bending their whole ſtudy and care, night and day how they may get them.

The cauſe is manifeeſt, men by nature can tell what theſe rhings are worth, and doe feele commodities ariſing by them which are ſweet to the fleſh. They neuer taſted of thoſe rich dainties which bee in Chriſt, and therefore they bee not moued with any deſire of them. For who can long for thoſe things which he neuer felt any ſweetnes of? Nay the madneſſe of the world goeth yet further: for they doe mocke and ſcorne at the bride when ſhee thus calleth for theſe heauenly thinges: For if they ſee any that is earneſtly affected to call vpon the Apoſtles and Prophets in their writings, and to the faithfull teachers that publiſh the ſame, to haue this wholeſome wine and dainty apples miniſtred vnto them, though they doe it not ſo earneſtly, as they themſelues ſeeke

gold

gold: yet they deeme them to bee out of their wits, to be fooliſh and mad. Doubtleſſe, they be more then mad which preferre earthly and tranſitory things, euen very droſſe, before the rich treaſures which are in Chriſt.

Then further, you ſhall haue many that will confeſſe, that in deed all good things are in Chriſt, and that ſuch onely are happy as be partakers of the ſame, and they ſeeme to haue a deſire to enioy the ſame, but they diſdaine that which the holy Church doth here, they will by no meanes ſeeke them at their hands whome the Lord hath made the deſpoſers. They deſpiſe the doctrine of the Prophets, and Apoſtles, they care not for hearing the ſame publiſhed. They know not that the true Church, euen all the faithfull, doe call vnto the miniſters of the liuely word, *Stay mee vp with flagons, and comfort mee with apples*, No, they wil receyue all as it were immediately from Chriſt himſelfe. Theſe are blinde and bewitched by Sathan: for they not know Gods ordinance, and how Chriſt doth feede his church with heauenly things by the hands of his Miniſters.

Indeede they bee but instruments, *Paul planteth, Apollo watereth, but God giueth the encrease,* 1.Cor.3.6. It is the Lorde himselfe that supporteth his Church by his diuine power: and therefore you may see what shee addeth touching that matter in the next verse, saying, *His left hand is vnder my head, and with his right hand he doth embrace me.*

She doth so call (as we haue seene) for the things at the handes of the ministers: but shee feeleth and confesseth that all the efficacy is from the Lord himselfe, shewing that hee doth stay her vp with both hands. *His left hand* (sayeth she) *is vnder my head, and with his right hand he doth embrace me.* Then marke how we are to take heed of two extremities. It is Gods ordinance to deliuer al the heauenly treasures vnto vs by the hands of his Ministers: he worketh by them as by instruments, holding them as starrs in his right hand, *Reu.* 1. We must take heede that we disdaine not to receyue them that way. And then wee must also beware, that wee depend not vpon the men, but with the Church here looke vp higher, euen vnto the Lord himselfe, who worketh all in all: for by the

the miniſtery of men wee are to be led, as it were, by the hand vnto Chriſt, in him wee are to ſtay, hee onely muſt vpholde vs.

Behold here the kindneſſe of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt vnto thoſe that truly do ſeeke him. Their frailety is great, but hee doth vphold them, & comfort them with both hands. Here is the reſt, here is the ioy, here is the comfort of euery afflicted ſoule, to be receyued thus into the arms of Chriſt. And what ſayeth hee? *Come vnto mee al ye that trauell, and be heauy laden, and I will refreſh you*, Math. 11.28. Here is a ſweet Sauiour to come vnto. Theſe things are plaine and eaſie: but that which followeth in the next verſe is ſomewhat hard to bee expounded. *I charge you O you daughters of Ieruſalem, by the Roes and by the Hindes of the field, that you ſtirre not vp, nor wake my loue vntill ſhee pleaſe.* Indeed they are thus to bee tranſlated: *I adiure you O daughters of Ieruſalem, or I lay an oath vpon you, or cauſe you to ſweare by the Roes, or by the Hindes of the field, if you ſtirre vp, or if you awake, &c.* for he vſeth the worde of making others to take an oath. Here will ariſe ſome difficulty about this manner of

oath, by the Roes or Hindes: but the greatest difficulty is to finde whether it bee Christ that giueth this straight charge, or the Church. By our English translation, you may say, there is no doubt, but that Christ giueth this charge, because it is *That you wake not my loue vntill hee please.* For if it were the Church, she would say, *That you wake not my loue vntill shee please.* Yea, but it is not so easily discussed by the Hebrew text: for the worde *loue, ahabbah,* is feminine: and if the church call Christ her loue, the construction is with a verbe of the feminine gender. Som doe expound it, that the Lord Iesus doth charge the false sisters of the Church, the degenerate assemblies of Idolaters, that they doe not molest, nor trouble this happy peace & rest of the Church, which she hath in him: for the Diuell hath plentie of such to worke his disquietnes withall. Some others doe make some reasons to proue, that it is not Christ, but the Church which giueth this straight charge not vnto her false sisters, but vnto her companions, that they doe not by any rude behauiour cause Christ to depart away, or to withdraw himselfe

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Indeede the Church is to warne all her weake daughters, to carrie themselues reuerently and purely in the presence of Christ, that they doe not any thing that may displease him.

The reasons alledged are not so strong as to proue it of necessity, to be the speech of the Church, and therefore I will not rehearse them. Which of them spake it, the matter is of great waight, as appeareth by the charge that is giuen by oath. But now touching the oath: are wee not to sweare onely by the Lord God? Is it not hee alone that searcheth the hearts, and the raines, and can tell where there is integrity? Is not he alone the patron of the iust and innocent, and the taker of vengeance vpon such as abuse his name? how then is here an oath giuen by creatures?

Some doe expound the words with an eclipse thus: *Abide you abroad with the Roes or with the Hindes of the field.* Others doe take it not as an oath, but as an obtestation, as if these things, namely, the Roes and the Hindes onely are called to witnesse, as you know it is an vsual thing in the Prophets, to call vpon creatures to

beare witneſſe. As *Moſes* calleth heauen and earth to record. Verely, it doth not ſeeme here to be a ſimple obteſtation: yet doth it not warrant men to take an oath by creatures, in as much as all thinges in this Song be miſticall. If it be an oath giuen by Chriſt for the quiet of his Church: Let vs take heed leſt we incurre the daunger of it, by being found among her diſturbers. If it be the Church that chargeth vs to beware of light and wanton, or rude behauiour in the preſence of ſo holy, and ſo glorious a King: Let vs feare & tremble, let vs ſtudie continually to bee holy and pure, meete to bee admitted into the banqueting houſe, and to bee in the preſence of a King and Queene ſo glorious.

Thus much for this time.

Let vs pray.

THE

The fourth Sermon.

CHAP. II.

8 *It is the voyce of my welbeloued, behold hee commeth leaping ouer the mountaines, & skippeth ouer the hilles.*

9 *My Welbeloued is like a Roe, or a young Hynde: behold he ſtandeth behind our wall looking through the windowes, ſhewing himſelfe through the grates.*

10 *My welbeloued ſpake, and ſayde vnto me, Ariſe my loue, my fayre one, and come away.*

11 *For behold the Winter is paſt, the raine is changed, and gone away.*

12 *The flowers appeare in the earth, the time of the ſinging of birds is come, and the voyce of the turtle is heard in our land.*

13 *The figge tree hath brought foorth her young figges, and the vines with their ſmall grapes haue caſt a ſauour: Ariſe my loue, my fayre one, and come away.*

14 *My doue thou art in the holes of the Rocke, in the ſecret places of the ſtayres, ſhew mee thy face, make mee to heare thy voyce, for thy voyce is ſweet, and thy face is comely.*

15 *Take vs the foxes, the little foxes, which deſtroy the vines, for our vines haue ſmall grapes.*

16 *My Welbeloued is mine, and I am his, hee feedeth among the Lillies.*

17 *Vntill the day breake, and the ſhaddowes flie away. Returne my welbeloued, & bee like a Roe, or a young Hart vpon the mountaines of Bether.*

N the former parte of this Chapter, we haue ſeene how Chriſt Ieſus calling himſelfe a roſe, & a Lillie, giueth vs to vnderſtand, that in him is the fountaine, the fulnes and perfection of all ſweet and goodly things. Alſo that from his ſweetneſſe and beauty, his Church is made ſo ſweet and fayre, that ſhee excelleth all other daughters as farre as the pure white Lillie doth the thornes. Then ſhee ſetteth forth the prayſe of her wel-

welbeloued, by a compariſō alſo: namely, that as the appletree excelleth the trees of the wood, ſo doth he excel the ſonnes. And further, by the ſhadow of this tree, and the frūit, and by being ledde into the houſe of wine, ſhee declareth that in him, ſhee is made partaker of all heauenly bleſſings, and feeling his loue, ſhee is euen ſicke with loue towards him, calling for the further partaking of thoſe graces, and is embraced, comforted and ſupported by Chriſt.

Laſtly, a ſtraight charge is giuen, that this may not be enterrupted. Now in the reſt of this Chapter, vnder another ſimilitude, namely, of the flouriſhing Spring, ſhee ſetteth foorth, how hee calleth her foorth to the viewing and partaking of thoſe heauenly things. I will firſt lay open vnto you (as I may ſay) the letter of the Allegory: for thereby wee ſhall the more eaſily come to the ſenſe. Conſider of two louers here in the world, betrothed the one to the other. The Woman remayning in the houſe in the winter, the man often abroad in the fields, and when the Spring time is come, hee calleth and enuiteth his Spouſe to come foorth to walke

walke, and to take the delight and comfort of those pleasant things, which the Spring doth afford. Euen so the Church the beloued Spouse of Christ, being of her selfe here in this world, as it were, shut vp in the house, vnder the barrennes of winter, is by her welbeloued called vpon to come forth, as it were to walke, to view and to take the solace and comfort of that heauenly spring.

This is the summe of all, that shee doth here report. And now let vs come to the particulars. *It is the voyce* (sayth she) *of my welbeloued, behold he commeth leaping ouer the mountaines, and skipping ouer the hilles. My welbeloued is like a Roe or a yong Hinde.* In these words you see, that shee sheweth how shee perceyued his comming, and the manner of his comming She perceiueth his comming by his voyce, shee heareth his voyce, shee knoweth his voyce: *It is the voyce,* (sayeth shee) *of my welbeloued: behold he commeth.* The Lord Iesus doth cal his chosen by his holy Word, that is his voyce. *And they know his voyce,* as he sayeth, *Iohn* 10. *My sheepe heare my voice.* By faith they discerne his voyce, euen the heauenly and pure doctrine: the men

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of this world, euen the Infidels that cānot heare him. There be many opinions, ſay they, how can wee tell which is the truth? And marke how by his voyce, that is, by his liuely word ſhe perceyueth that Chriſt commeth vnto her. It is a ſpirituall, and an inuiſible comming, and ſhee hath a ſpirituall eare to heare, and the eyes of the ſpirit to behold him. *Let him that hath an eare* (ſayeth the holy Ghoſt) *heare what the Spirite ſayeth to the Churches*, Reu: 2. 3. This voyce of Chriſt ſoundeth in the world, but none heare it, none ioy in it but the holy church with her children. You may reade in Prouerbs, chap. 1. How *Salomon* there ſayeth, *That the higheſt wiſdome* (that is *Chriſt*) *vttereth her voyce aloude in the ſtreetes, in the open places, and aſſemblies, but is not regarded.* Onely (I ſay) the church heareth, and is ſo ioyfull at it, that ſhee ſayeth, *behold hee commeth*, Then touching the manner of his comming ſhe ſetteth it forth, not onely to be ſwift and ſpeedy, comparing him *to a Roe or young Hinde*, but alſo that no difficulties in the way can hinder or let him: for he leapeth ouer mountaines and hilles. A moſt worthy thing to be noted, that nothing

thing can keepe backe or ſeparate Chriſt from his Church: his loue is ſo great towards her. There bee euen, as it were hie hils and mountaines of ſinnes in the people of God, which might ſeparate, and the Diuell rayſeth vp bankes to make the way vnpleaſant: but hee paſſeth ouer all theſe high mountaines. ſo aboundant is his kindneſſe and loue. Saint *Paul* handleth this point, Rom. 8. 38. 39. *Neither death nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor thinges to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall bee able to ſeparate vs from the loue of God, which is in Chriſt Ieſus our Lord.* Of this the Spouſe gloryeth, ſaying, *Behold hee commeth leaping ouer the mountaines, and skipping ouer the hils.* To conclude this point, wee ſee that the faithfull doe by the voyce of Chriſt perceyue him comming vnto them, and that hee commeth ſwiftly ouer all lets.

Now to the next point, wherein is ſet forth how they ſee him preſent. *Beholde* (ſayeth ſhee) *he ſtandeth behinde our wall looking through the Windowes, ſhewing himſelfe through the gates.* This dooth expreſſe that Chriſt doth not in full man-

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ner exhibite and ſhew himſelfe preſent vnto his church in this world. He ſtandeth, as it were, behinde the wall, and looketh in at the windowes, ſhewing himſelfe through lattesſes, this is cleare and manifeſt, for *Abraham* ſaw him: the Prophets and *Moſes* ſaw him: yea all the godly vnder the law ſaw him: but yet vnder types and ſhadowes, as it were looking in through the Windowes. And ſince he was manifeſted in the fleſh, and hath ſhewed himſelfe more fully, wee ſee him preſent but by faith. *Behold* (ſayeth hee) *I am with you vnto the end of the world.* But yet the Church ſeeth him preſent, but by the eye of faith. Alſo as Saint *Paul* ſayeth, *Wee know but in part*, 1. *Cor.* 13. Wee ſee him not fully, but as it were thorow the windowes. Then marke yet further how ſhee proceedeth in ſetting forth, how hee calleth her: *My welbeloned ſpake and ſaide vnto mee, Ariſe my loue, my fayre one, and come away.* What meaneth this? Verely, the regenerate, euen the holy ones of God are regenerate but in part while they liue here. There remaineth ſtill in them a lumpe of corruption, and ſo farre as that extendeth, they bee earth-

earthly minded, and euen willingly ſit downe in this world, hauing their affections ſomewhat entangled with the cares and pleaſures of the fleſh: wherefore this is the continuall voyce of Chriſt, ſounding in their eares, Ariſe, O ye whom I loue, which are fayre in my ſight, and come away: Ariſe, ariſe from the loue & delight in earthly things, and ſet your affection vpon the things which are aboue. I need not to ſtand in the amplification of this point, the holy Scripture in all places, both in the Prophets and Apoſtles, is full of theſe voyces which call vpon vs to ariſe vp in our hearts and mindes from theſe tranſitorie thinges which bee vpon the earth, vnto heauen, and heauenly things.

Happy are wee if wee doe heare this voyce of Chriſt calling vs ſo louingly, ſo that wee obey it. O how dull, how heauy, how lumpiſh and prone to the earth, wee are, which are ſo little moued with this continuall call of our moſt louing ſauiour? Wee are ready to minde earthly things, and euen to ſitte downe in them, and yet our conuerſation is in heauen, Phil. 3. There is the holy City where our free-

freedome is, after that wee ſhould long. Wee are heere but pilgrimes and ſtraungers for a time: why doe wee then ſitte downe? why doe we not, as wee are here willed ariſe and come away? The worldlings are not moued with this, for they can feele no taſte nor ſweetneſſe in any thing but the world, and it is death to thē to heare this voyce, *Ariſe and come away*. Can they willingly part from their treaſure, yea, I may ſay, euen from their God, vpon which they haue ſet their heart, that is to ſay, their gold, their ſiluer, their houſes, and their lands? Let it not bee ſo with vs: but let vs ariſe with our holy mother at the voyce of Chriſt: let vs in heart & minde aſcend vp into the Heauens, *vſing the things of this world as though wee vſed them not*, according to the doctrine of the holy Apoſtle, 1. Cor. 7.

Moreouer, let vs marke here, how our Lord Ieſus Chriſt lifteth vp his Church from this earth vnto the heauens, euen by his mighty voyce.

All the faithfull in themſelues, are euen like vnto heauy ſtones, which doe flye ſo farre vpward as they are driuen by a force, and when that force ceaſeth, they come

come downe againe apace to the earth: For looke how farre the Lord with his voyce and loue lifteth vs vp, ſo farre wee aſcend, and if that worke not any longer, wee come downe with ſpeed.

In the next place wee haue the Allegorie, vnder which the Lord doth perſwade the church to ariſe, and come away from the loue of theſe earthly things, vnto the meditation and deſire of the heauenly and ſpirituall life. It is taken from the time of the yeare. In Winter all things lye as it were barren vnder froſt and ſnow and colde blaſts. There is no pleaſure to bee taken then. But in the Spring time all ſweete things ſpring, and bud forth, and there is the melody of birds ſinging. Then is there comfort & ſolace to bee taken in walking abroad: Therefore he ſayeth: *For behold the winter is paſt the raine is changed and gone away.* And then hee addeth a deſcription of the Spring, by the flowers that appeare, by the ſinging of birdes, by the voyce of the Turtle, by the figge tree bringing foorth figs, and the vines with their firſt grapes, caſting forth a ſmell.

The perſwaſion then beeing drawne from

from the comparison of the times, we are to consider, how it standeth in the mysticall sense. And that is, what the state of all the Elect was before their calling, and then what it is after they be called of the Lord, and regenerate. Before they bee called, their hearts bee euen like the earth in winter, vnder the cold frost, & stormes of sinne: For there can no sweete thing grow vp, there is an vtter barrennesse. After that the Lord hath called them, and that they be regenerate, there is an heauenly warmth of his spirit, and the sweet dew of his graces, and then the sweetest flowers appeare, then the wholesom fruits doe budde forth: then is there peace and ioy in the holy Ghost, euen heauenly melody, which is represented here by the singing of the birds.

Then the perswasion standeth thus vnto euery one of the faithfull, which are yet somewhat entangled with earthly things, and with the loue of this present world: so that their affections are not so lifted vp, and set vpon the desire of heauenly things as they ought to be. *Arise, O my Loue, my fayre one, and come away*: for you ought not to set your hearts now vpon thinges

that are vaine and tranſitory, as you did in the dayes of your ignorance, whē you lay frozen in your ſinnes. For hauing now beene made partakers of the heauenly graces, you muſt take your ſolace and delight in heauenly things.

It is a very ſtrange thing to conſider the ſlacknes that is in the holy Saints of God, to ariſe vp from this vaine world, vnto the meditation and ioy of the world to come. When we haue felt the worke of God in vs, vnto our great ioy and comfort, when the ſweet flowers and wholeſome fruites haue budded foorth in vs: yet a drouſineſſe doth come vpon vs, and wee could euen willinglie ſeate our ſelues heere below together with thoſe men, which haue their portion in this life. It is no maruell, that men ſo long as they haue not taſted of heauenly things, doe greedily laye holde of this World, and cleaue vnto it: they know no better, but as I ſayd, is it not very ſtrange & meruellous, that ſuch as haue been euen rauiſhed in their minds with the ſweetnes of Chriſt: ſhould euen waxe colde againe? Thus it falleth out, and therefore ſhee reporteth how he calleth againe: *Ariſe my loue, my fayre one, and*

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come away. So hard a thing it is to drawe our mindes from this earthly trash. But most specially you may note in this place the wonderfull kindnesse of Christ Iesus our Lord, who notwithstanding, the dulnesse of his chosen, yet esteemeth thē so highly, as appeareth by his speeches, *Arise my loue, my fayre one, &c.* We see plainly by this, that the great imperfections which remaine in the Regenerate, do not diminish the loue of Christ towards them for they be still his loue: nor make them deformed, nor loathsome in his eyes, for hee sayeth, *my fayre one.* From hence we may draw two very good and necessary instructions, The one is for our comfort against the temptations of the Diuell, who taketh occasion by the fraileties and imperfections, which are in vs, to beare vs in hand, that we be vtterly deformed in the eyes of Christ, and that hee doth not loue, but hate vs.

Beloued, if a man haue touching true faith and repentance, a sincerity and an vnfained vprightnesse of heart, let him be assured, that albeit he bee clogged with much corruption of the flesh, the burthen whereof doth make him to sigh & grone,

ſeeming deformed in his owne eyes: yet is hee beautifull and deare vntó Chriſt.

Then the other inſtruction is, that wee are to imitate this kindneſſe of our Lorde and Maſter. Many when they beholde ſome things amiſſe in thoſe that profeſſe the Goſpell of Chriſt, neuer looke vpon their vertues, although they ſhine: but abhorre and deſpiſe them. Let vs take heede of this, and let vs entirely loue and eſteem them fayre and precious, which feare the Lord, and ſtudy to obey him, although we ſee in them otherwiſe many great imperfections. This example of Chriſt leadeth vs hereunto, who calleth her his loue, and his fayre one, which yet is ſo addicted in part vnto this vaine world, and ſo dull to the meditation and delight in heauenly things, that hee calleth vnto her againe and againe, *Ariſe and come away, ariſe, and come away.* Yea, wee may perceiue this ſlackneſſe, and as it were, halting dulneſſe that is in the Saints, in that hee calleth vpon her, and vſeth yet a further perſwaſion vnto her in the next verſe, to come forth vnto him. The wordes are theſe: *My doue which art in the cliftes of the Rocke, in the ſecret places of the ſtayres, ſhew*

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mee thy face, make mee to heare thy voyce, for thy voyce is sweet, and thy face is comely.

The latter part of this ſentence is cleare and eaſie to be vnderſtood, that he calleth vnto her to come into his company, and to talke with him: adding this encouragement, that ſhee is beautifull, and well fauoured of face, and her ſpeech is vnto him ſweet and pleaſant. But how are we to take the former part which is this, *My doue which art in the clefts of the rocke, in the hollow place of the ſtayer?* Heere is a myſtical ſpeech, which we are to enquire the meaning of firſt, according to the Letter: Wee know that a doue doth ſeeke for ſome hole or hollow place in a rocke, or other high thing, into which ſhe doth enter to bee ſecret and ſafe from deuouring birdes that would eate her vp; as from the alſo Fowler. Euen ſo this doue, this ſimple, meeke, harmeles, and chaſt Spouſe of the Lord Ieſus, hath her dwelling in the hollow place of an high Rocke, the cliftes whereof, are as ſtayes, but ſo as in a rocke, they bee ſuch as men cannot clime vp.

But what is this rocke then in which this doue reſteth? No man can deny but

that this rocke is the moſt high God. You know that the holy Prophet *Dauid* calleth him, *The rocke of his ſaluation.* This is a rocke which none can clime vnto, in the clift of this rocke, the doue dwelleth ſafe. Sathan is euen like vnto a greedie kite, which alwayes lyeth in wayte for to deuoure her, but ſhee remayneth cloſe in this rocke, where he cannot come at her. What is then to bee vnderſtood by the clift or hollow place of this rocke? Surely, it is Gods eternall counſell and election of his Church vnto life and glory: for it is in that holy counſell of the Lord, euen as in the hollow place of a moſt high rocke, that this doue dwelleth ſafe, Saint *Paul* ſayeth, *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, and hath this ſeale, God knoweth who bee his.* 2. Tim. 2. ver. 19. And our Sauiour ſheweth, *That it is not poſſible that the Elect ſhould periſh,* Math. 24. It is a madneſſe for any man to thinke that Almighty God can erre, or that hee can change his purpoſe, yea, or that any can withſtand the ſame. Therefore in his eternall counſel and election, as in a moſt ſure rocke, the ſaluation of the church reſteth.

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The Prince of darkneſſe hath endeauoured with all his forces to aſſayle the ſame, but all in vaine, Reu. 12. Thus we ſee briefly what is meant by this that hee calleth *her hir doue which is in the cliftes of the rocke.* Where we note what a weake ſtate the Church were in, if ſhee had not her abode in this rocke. For if ſhee were out of of it, looke how the poore harmeleſſe doue is a prey vnto the deuouring hawke, ſo ſhould ſhee bee vnto her enemies: her ſtrength is in this high rocke, her ſafety in the place, in which ſhee remayneth, in her ſelfe ſhee is but as a ſilly doue: from this rocke (as I ſayde) none can plucke her downe. For marke what Chriſt ſayth touching that matter. *My ſheepe heare my voyce, and I know them, and they follow mee, and I giue vnto them eternall life, and they ſhall not periſh for euer, neyther ſhall any plucke them out of my hand. My Father that gaue them mee is greater then all, neyther can any plucke them out of the hand of my Father, I and the Father are one,* Iohn 10. ver. 27. 28. 29. 30. There is then no deſtroying of this doue, though ſhee bee in her ſelfe but as a Doue, the hawke, the kite, or the fowler cannot

reach vnto her. Bleſſed be the Lord God who hath thus prouided for the ſafety of his poore ſeruants: and bleſſed bee the power of his Maieſty, World without end.

Now let vs obſerue further, wherfore the Bridegroome doth make mention of this, that his doue is in the clifts of the rocke. Surely, hee doth herein note the very well head and fountaine of all heauenly bleſſings, according as Saint *Paul* openeth the matter, ſaying: *Bleſſed bee God, euē the Father of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt who hath bleſſed vs with all ſpirituall bleſſings in heauenly things in Chriſt, as hee had choſen vs in him before the foundation of the world was layde, that wee ſhould bee holy and without blame before him, through loue,* Epheſ. 1. verſ. 3. 4. Then further hee vſeth it as an argument to moue his ſpouſe to the contemplation of heauenly things. As if hee ſhould ſpeake thus vnto her, O my doue, thou art from euerlaſting in the ſecret counſell of the moſt high God choſen in mee, and ordayned vnto eternall glory in the heauens: thou art prepared for things far more excellent thē theſe that be tranſitory, ſet not thine heart therfore

fore vpon them, but lift vp thy mind and thine affection vnto heauenly things, meditate vpon them, and delight therein: come so into my presence and let me see thy face, and heare my voyce. Iudge in your selues beloued, is it meete that such as bee chosen to be heyres of eternal glory, should set their heart vpon the things of this world? Surely, al the while that they doe so, they doe euen hide their faces from Christ, they do not vtter their voyce vnto him. Marke then I pray you how that when the faithfull soule dooth rise vp in contemplation from these earthly things vnto the heauenly, taking her delight and solace in them, she doth then shew her face vnto Christ, shee maketh him then to heare her voyce. And then is her voyce sweet vnto him, for shee vttereth vnto him many sweet prayers, praises and thanks for all his benefits: and her face also is fayre and delightsome vnto him. What an encouragement is this to make vs seeke after the Lord Iesus? Doth he call vpon vs in this maner, and doth he thus esteeme the voyce and beauty of the faithfull soule that cōmeth vnto him? and shal we be slacke? Shall we lye drousie & dull

dull in our affections? Let this ſame ſpeech of Chriſt bee euen printed in our mindes. *My doue that art in the holes of the rocke, in the ſecret place of the ſtayre, ſhewe mee thy face, make me to heare thy voyce, for thy voyce is ſweet, and thy face is comely.* Is not this a moſt ſweet voyce of our Sauiour which hee vttereth vnto euery one of vs? Ought it not to make vs to runne ſwiftly vnto him? Are they not worthy a thouſand times to periſh, who ſet light by the calling of ſo louing a Sauiour? Ariſe, ſtirre vp your ſelues, be not ſo earthly minded, but delight in heauēly things; let your mind aſcend vp vnto Chriſt, and talke with him:

If hee were auſtere, or did deſpiſe vs, it might haue ſome colour for negligence, but when hee doth thus call vpon vs to come, what excuſe can there be? Let vs not bee like vnto the idolatrous Papiſts, who ſeeke vnto other mediators, and interceſſors, as if wee poore wretches might not be ſo bold as to preſume to come vnto him. You ſee how that he willeth his doue to come to him, hee doth not ſend her vnto others, ſaying, *Shew me thy face, make me to heare thy voyce.* Shall wee

we then belieue the Diuell, who in the Popiſh Church telleth vs, that wee muſt deuoutely worſhip and pray to ſom Saint, that ſo we may procure his or her fauour to entreat Chriſt for vs, becauſe it is ouer great preſumption for vs to com directly vnto him? O beloued, will you giue credite to ſuch againſt the flat voyce of the Lord? Looke alſo what is written, *Seeing therefore Brethren, that by the bloud of Ieſus wee may bee bold to enter into the holy place by the new and liuing way, which hee hath prepared for vs, through the vayle that is his fleſh, and ſeeing wee haue an high Prieſt which is ouer the houſe of God Let vs drawe neere with a true heart in aſſurance of faith, ſprinckled in our hearts from an euil conſcience, and waſhed in our bodies with pure water*, Heb. 10. verſ. 19. 20. 21. 22. Thus are wee willed to goe to the Lord our God himſelfe.

Now it followeth, *Take vs the Foxes, the little Foxes which deſtroy the vines, for our vines haue ſmall grapes.* Here is a charge giuen, and a reaſon rendred, the charge is, that they ſhould catch the foxes, yea euen the little foxes, the reaſon is, becauſe they deſtroy the vines, being yet in ſhooting forth

forth their ſmall grapes. Here ariſe diuers queſtions, as firſt who giueth this charge, take vs the foxes. Secondly, to whom this buſines is committed. Thirdly, what maner of foxes theſe be, and how they deſtroy the vines. And laſtly, how they are to be taken.

Touching the firſt, it is Chriſt who giueth this charge. He hath care ouer his vine, he hath authority to commaund, & the Church doth here report his ſpeech, and alſo vnder his authority doth cõmand likewiſe the ſame thing. Then for the ſecond, it is out of all doubt that this charge is layde vpon all the faithfull Paſtors and Teachers, and godly Princes. Concerning the third, theſe Foxes bee falſe teachers, heretikes and ſeducers of the Lords people. Theſe be called Foxes, becauſe of their ſubtilty and craft: for all ſorts of heretikes and falſe teachers, doe winde in themſelues craftily, making a ſhew of truth and holineſſe. *They come in ſheepes cloathing* (as our Sauior ſayth, *Mat.* 7. 15.) *But inwardly they bee nothing but rauening wolues.* It may ſeem very ſtrange how ſuch deſtroying foxes, yea ſuch grieuous rauening Wolues, as the holy Ghoſt ter-

termeth them. Mat. 7. Act. 20 ſhould make ſuch a fayre ſhew of truth and holineſſe, as that they ſhould ſeduce and draw men from the right way, into the crooked by-wayes of hereſies and errors, and ſo deſtroy and waſte the vines. But Saint *Paul* ſheweth a reaſon, that it is no maruell, for ſpeaking of the foxes of his time, he ſayth: *Such falſe Apoſtles are deceitfull workers tranſformed into the Apoſtles of Chriſt: and no maruell* (ſayeth he) *for Sathan himſelfe is trausformed into an Angell of light, therfore it is no great thing, though his Miniſters tranſforme themſelues, as though they were the Miniſters of righteouſneſſe,* 2. Cor 11. v. 13. 14. 15. Theſe foxes then haue their ſubtlety from that great foxe the diuell. Many and differing ſort of theſe Foxes, were in the time of the Law, and many alſo haue euer beene vnder the Goſpell, and ſhall be euer vnto the end of the World: Among which the great Romiſh Foxe is the principall. And howſoeuer they bee differing in their errors, and falſe opinions: yet herein they meete in one, that they bee all ſubtill Foxes, waſting and deſtroying the vines of Chriſt. Here wee may behold the ſtate of

Gods

Gods Church, that there ſhould bee alwayes Foxes that will creepe in among the vines, and if there bee not (as I may ſay) hunters, to hunt and to catch them, wee may eaſily perceyue what perill the young grapes be in. Wee are therefore to pray inſtantly vnto the Lord, who hath planted this vine, that he wil alwayes raiſe vp wiſe and vigilant keepers, which may indeed catch theſe wily Foxes, and therein we come to the fourth point, which is, how they muſt be taken.

Doubtleſſe, the faithfull Miniſters of the Goſpell, are ſayd to catch them, when by the word of God they doe ſtrongly confute their hereſies, and by excommunication caſt them foorth of the Church. Then ſeeing Heretikes being conuinced, yet continue obſtinate, and do ſinne, euen condemned by their owne iudgement, as *Paul* ſayeth, *Titus* 3. ver. 11. and ſo will impudently goe forward to deſtroy the Church, the godly Magiſtrates are with ciuill and corporall puniſhments to catch them. Thus wee ſee the care which the Lord hath ouer his vine, that the Foxes may be taken, which are ready to deſtroy the grapes, euen in

their

their firſt budding, they would ſeduce the faithfull, euen while they bee young and weake.

It followeth, *My welbeloued is mine, and I am his which feedeth among the Lillies.* Vpon all thoſe former ſpeeches of Chriſt which ſhee repeated, ſhee doth breake forth into a glorying, not glorying indeed in her ſelfe, but in him, according to that which Saint *Paul* alleadgeth out of the Prophet, *He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*, 1. Cor. 1. ver. 31. And marke what it is that ſhee gloryeth of, for it is indeed that, in which conſiſteth her whole felicity, namely the Communion which is betwixt the Lord Ieſus Chriſt and her, and the ſweet fruit which ſhe receyueth thereby. This holy Communion is expreſſed after this manner: *My Welbeloued is mine, and I am his.* Here we muſt firſt note, that there is an vnion betwixt Chriſt and his Church, frō whence commeth this Communion? Hee is her head, and ſhe is by the ſpirite vnited vnto him, as his miſticall body: hee beeing her head, whatſoeuer is in him, it is hers: and therefore it is ſayd, *That hee is made vnto vs of God, Wiſedome, Righteouſnes,*

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Sanctification, and Redemption, 1. Cor. 1. *It hath pleased the Father, that in him all fulnesse should dwell*, Colos. 1. v. 19. In him is holinesse, in him is power, in him is life eternall: and all these things doe flowe from him, the head vpon her, for she saith: *My welbeloued is mine.* Behold then what an incomparable treasure shee doth boast of, when shee sayeth, *My welbeloued is mine?* For all the riches, the ioyes, and the glory of heauen are hers, for he being hers all is hers: seeing nothing that is good is wanting in him. From hence it is that the Apostle sayeth: *Hee will make her to himselfe a glorious Church*, Ephes. 5. And then on the other side shee sayeth, *and I am his*, by this expressing, that as he hath redeemed her with his owne bloud, yea, as he hath taken vpon him her sinne, her curse, her death, and hath made her righteous in himselfe, and inheritor with him of eternall glory, so shee doth consecrate her selfe wholly vnto him, she is only his, she forsaketh all other. Shee committeth not whoredome with Idols, she doth not embrace the doctrine of Diuels, shee doth not set her heart vpon the vaine delightes and pleasures of sinne, but shee delighteth

in

in him, hee is her ioy, ſhe is pure and chaſt and holy vnto him, & offereth vnto him all the ſweet and delectable fruites of her faith, and loue towards him. This is that which the holy Apoſtle ſayth, *That he had prepared the Church of Corinth, that hee might preſent them as a pure virgin vnto one man, euen Chriſt.* 2. Cor. 11. ver. 2. What ſhall wee ſay then vnto thoſe, which wold haue Chriſt to be theirs, but they will bee none none of his? They ſeeme to boaſt of a faith in his death, and paſſion, as if by the ſame they ſhould obtaine righteouſneſſe and life eternall: but they bee vncleane, they liue not vnto Chriſt, they be not ledde with his Spirite, and therefore they be not his: for what doctrine they profeſſe, they doe not greatly care, and the world and fleſhly pleaſures are their ioy: fruits they offer vp none vnto Chriſt. O happie is that ſoule, which with a true and liuely faith can ſay, *My welbeloued is mine, and I am his.* And happy are they which ſay he is theirs, & yet they are not his, they liue not vnto him. Then ſhee ſayeth, that *hee feedeth among the Lillies:* we know that the lillies, are fayre, ſweete, ſoft and pleaſant, and therfore the church

fayth, that her Spouſe feedeth his flockes among the Lillies: which is to let vs know that hee feedeth her with moſt excellent things. Moſt true it is, that ther is nothing vnder heauen that can bee eſteemed as a full ſhadow or reſemblance of the heauenly Manna, wherewith Chriſt feedeth the ſoules of his: but the Church vſeth that which may in ſome ſort reſemble it. And now there remayneth onely the laſt verſe of this Chapter, in which the holy ſpouſe vpon the feeling of thoſe former benefites, concludeth with a vehement prayer vnto Chriſt, ſaying, *Vntill the day breake, and the ſhaddowes flie away. Returne my welbeloued, & bee like a Roe, or a young Hart vpon the mountaines of Bether.* The ſumme of her prayer is, that her welbeloued from whom ſhee receyueth all her comfort would come ſpeedily vnto her, in all her need, all the time of her peregrination here vpon earth, and not by any meanes be ſeparated from her.

Indeed the wordes are miſticall, and her firſt ſpeech is as much as to ſay, vntill the morning, when ſhee ſayeth, *Vntill the day downe, and the ſhadowes flye away:* For the night is but the ſhaddowe of the

earth

earth, ſo that the Sunne comming vnto our Horizon, with his beames cauſeth all ſhaddowes to flye away from the vpper face of the earth.

The Church vpon earth, is as it were in the night, as ſome take it, vnder the ſhaddowes of the Law, which ſhould, and did flye away after that cleare day of Chriſts reſurrection? For when our Lord was manifeſted in the fleſh, it was a cleare day in compariſon of the time of the Law, when they had al vnder ſhadows: but we may extend this prayer (as I take it) more fitly to the ſecond comming of the Bridegroome, for then indeed ſhall be the perfect cleare day, then ſhall all ſhadowes vaniſh, and there ſhall bee no obſcurity, but moſt glorious light. In the 48. Pſalme, where the Prophet ſpeaketh of the wicked, and ſayeth, That the righteous ſhall haue dominion ouer them in the morning, he ſpeaketh it of the day of the generall iudgement, which is the beginning, and euen in the morning of that euerlaſting moſt glorious light, in which the Saintes ſhall dwell. Shee prayeth then, that till that moſt glorious Morning, while ſhe is heere

in the wildernesse, he will bee like a Roe, or a young Hart, that is, that he will come swiftly vnto her, for her defence and comfort in all her tribulations.

Her enemies are great, and her frailties are many, and shee prayeth that hee will passe ouer all lets of her sinnes, or whatsoeuer, which shee calleth the mountaines of Bether, that is, of separation. We see then that this is a most sweet prayer of the Church, and which euery faithfull soule doth earnestly powre forth vnto him, that hee will come speedily vnto them, to defend & comfort them while they be here in the middest of cruell enemies, of fraileties and calamities. O Lord Iesus come speedily and saue vs.

THE

The fift Sermon.

CHAP. III.

1 *In my bed by night I ſought him whome my ſoule loueth, I ſought him but I found him not.*

2 *I will ariſe now, and goe about in the Citie, by the ſtreetes and by the open places. I will ſeeke him whom my ſoule loueth, I ſought him, but I found him not.*

3 *The Watchmen that went about the Citie found mee: Haue you ſeene him whom my ſoule loueth?*

4 *When I had paſſed a little from them, then I found him whom my ſoule loueth, I layd holde on him, and left him not vntill I had brought him vnto my mothers houſe, into the chamber of her that conceyued me.*

5 *I charge you O daughters of Ieruſalem by the roes and by the Hindes of the field, that*

yee stirre not vp, nor wake my loue vntill shee please.

N the former Chapter the bride made report how her Loue Iesus Christ in most kind manner sought her vp, and called vpon her againe to arise to come foorth vnto him from the cares and delights in earthly things vnto the meditation and ioy in things that be heauenly and spiritual. And now in this Chapter she sheweth how she sought after him, hee hauing withdrawne himselfe, and missing of her, yet she ceased not, nor gaue ouer seeking in all places vntill shee found him, and brought him home vnto her mothers house Heere is then in some respect a diuerse and a differing estate and condition from the former. For the faithfull do not continue alwayes alike, but euen now, Christ shewing himselfe vnto them, and calling vpon them, that are eaeu rapt and enflamed with the loue and ioy of heauenly things. By and by euen as a kettle vpon the fire, which

which while the flame is vehement doth ſeethe faſt, and as the flame ſlaketh, ſo it cooleth: they waxe ſomewhat colder, they fall into ſome drouſineſſe and ſecurity, they feele not the ioyes and delights which they did, Chriſt ſeemeth to be gon from them. And then being eyther touched with ſome affliction, or moued by ſome meanes, they doe ſeeke to ſeele the ſame ioyes that they felt in him before. They would alwayes feele them: for they be ioyes that paſſe all earthly ioyes, as the Prophet *Dauid*, Pſal. 4. ſheweth, That the light of Gods countenance put more gladneſſe into his heart, then the worldly men had when they receyued great plenty of corne, and wine, and oyle, wherewith they make themſelues merry. And how earneſtly the holy Spouſe doth ſeeke after her Welbeloued, her words will declare, which wee will now come vnto. Firſt, Let vs conſider the external things, which do repreſent and figure the things which are inuiſible, miſticall, ſpirituall, and heauenly. The Church is compared to a virgine berrothed, who dwelling in her mothers houſe in a City, in which there bee Watchmen that goe

about in the night, and while she is in her bed, her mind runneth vpon her Welbeloued; shee cannot endure his absence, but ariseth out of her bed, and euen in the night walketh about in the streetes of the City for to seeke him. Who will not say that this were a vehement loue, that should cause a damosell to doe this? Indeed in this earthly loue it should passe modesty: but in the spirituall loue, as we shall see, it is most highly to be commended.

Let vs come then to the particulars, *In my bed* (sayeth shee) *by night*. What is the bed of the Church? Where doth shee lye downe to rest and take ease? It is a drowsie security which the flesh bringeth, and in which all the true children of God, according to the flesh, could be content to nestle themselues, and euen to lye quiet, & warme, were it not that they are moued by the operation of an other spirit then their owne, for euen in this bed she seeketh: There is a worke wrought within, that will not let her altogether forget her bride groome: yea, the godly in that coldnes which commeth vpon them, doe remember what ioyes they haue felte in Christ,

and

and oftentimes they doe wish, that they did euen continually feede them. But marke then how yet they seeke him vpon their bed, which is not to be allowed. Most gladly they would tast of his sweetnes, but withall they doe desire to haue ease and pleasure in the flesh: fain would they lye still in their warme bed. This I say, is the thing which wee doe all couet: faine would wee feele the ioyes of heauen in Christ, and faine would wee also inioy the delights of the flesh: we would haue both, but this will not bee: for marke how he sayeth, *In my bedde by night I sought him whome my soule loueth: I sought him, but I found him not.* Shee findeth him not while shee is in her bed, hee will not so be found. He that will finde Christ, must rowse himselfe out of that bedde of carnall ease.

If a man desire and wish to feele the sweetnes of Christ, and will also stuffe himselfe with carnall delights, hee shall not taste of him. if hee doe taste, it will vanish. Therefore the holy Bride heere goeth further, and sayth, *I will arise.* Behold shee ariseth out of her bedd to seeke him, for there shee cannot finde him, and find

finde him ſhee will. And when commeth ſhee out of her bed? Euen in the night. If thers bee any time fitte for the bedde, it is the night, and then it is moſt inconuenient, and moſt it grieueth to come out of the bed. But ſhee commeth out of her bed, euen in the night for to ſeeke her loue. Rather then ſhe will not find him ſhee will forgoe and forſake all eaſe and pleaſures in the world.

Is this the true Church? and are theſe the right Chriſtians? What ſhall wee ſay then vnto thoſe which wil forſake no delight, no pleaſure to ſeeke Chriſt? They haue a deſire to feele his ſweetnes, but they lye ſtill vpon their bed. O beloued, al you that haue euer taſted, as the holy Apoſtle *Peter* ſpeaketh, how ſweet the Lord is, 1, *Pet.* 2. and doe couet to taſte him ſtill, remember continually what is here done: Seeke him, but come out of your bedde. Let not your loue bee ſo cold, as to bee withelde from ſeeking the Lord by any carnall delights. And behold yet further, how the ſpouſe doth not only riſe out of her bed to ſeeke her welbeloued, but alſo goeth forth into the ſtreetes, & open places of the City, ſeeking all about for him.

Here

Here is a very great loue expreſſed, heere is a maruellous zeale. A virgin to riſe out of her bed, and in the vnſeaſonable time of the night to walke about in the lanes and ſtreetes of the City: what inconueniences and dangers might enſue? Well ſhe caſteth no perils, her mind is ſo ſet vpon her Spouſe, that ſhee cannot reſt, her burning loue towards him thruſteth her forward to ſeeke him, whatſoeuer come of it But may ſhe not ſeeme to bee ſcarſe well in her wits? Could ſhe not tarrie vntil it were day? or might ſhe not haue patience to expect his comming vnto her. Surely, the Worldlings doe wonder at thoſe, which with feruent zeale and loue doe ſeeke after Chriſt Ieſus: and they oftentimes ſay plainely, that they bee more then halfe mad: for when they beholde how the ſeruants of God debarre themſelues from ſinnefull pleaſures, giuing themſelues to reading hearing, and holy meditation in the lawes of God, that ſo they may obey him, they wonder as at a ſtrange thing that they run not with thē vnto the ſame exceſſe of riot, as the holy Apoſtle ſayeth, and therefore they ſpeake euill, 1. Pet. 4. ver. 4. When they ſee men

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ſo zealous in ſeeking Chriſt, as that neither the danger of their liues, nor loſſe of their goods can ſtay them: doe they not ſay, what madde fooles be theſe? They will not in any wiſe buy Chriſt ſo deare, they hope to goe to heauen without any ſuch trouble. They ſee no reaſon why they ſhould depriue themſelues of any pleaſures or delights for to ſeeke heauenly things.

They will not profeſſe the Goſpell, ſo as to bee mocked and pointed at: If any great man do but frowne at them, they lay the Bible aſide. I thinke you may eaſily ſee the difference betweene theſe and the faithfull, who heere vnder the perſon of the Church are ſayd to ariſe out of their beds in the night, and to ſeeke about in the ſtreetes of the City. Theſe bee not withheld with eaſe and pleaſures, nor yet ſcarred with perilles and inconueniences. Theſe doe know that Chriſt is worth the ſeeking, although they ſhould looſe theyr liues for ſeeking of him, Yea they doe approue the doctrine of Saint *Paul*, who ſayth, *That the light and momentany afflictions of this life, are more worthy the glory that ſhall be reuealed,*

And

And how well the Lord approueth of this loue and zeale in his Spouſe, aduenturing herſelfe thus to ſeeke him, you may ſee by his owne wordes in the Goſpell, when hee ſayeth: *That except a man deny himſelfe, take vp his croſſe and follow him hee cannot bee his Diſciple.* And, *Whoſoeuer doth not forſake Father and Mother, Wife, and goods, yea, and his life, he is not worthy of him.*

But the Spouſe here ſayde, *I will ariſe, and goe about in the City, by the ſtreetes and open places, and I will ſeeke him whome my ſoule loueth.* Then ſhe addeth, *I ſought him but I found him not.* Here may two queſtions be demaunded: The one, whether the Church be euer without Chriſt. The other may be this: whether the Lorde do not deale leſſe kindly with his Spouſe, in letting her wander about to ſeeke him, and doth not by and by ſhew himſelfe vnto her? Touching the firſt, it is out of all doubt, that the Lord Ieſus is alwayes preſent with is Church, but the faithfull haue not alwayes the ſame liuely feeling of his preſence. He ſeemeth to hide himſelfe away, and to bee abſent: and then doe the godly labour to haue a more full and

and perfect ſence of his preſence, it is his ſecret worke in them that they ſeeke.

And now for the other Queſtion, that *CHRIST* doeth ſuffer his to ſeeke him through ſo manie difficultyes, and doeth not at the firſt ſhew himſelfe, it is not to be imputed vnto any want of kindeneſſe, or for her hurte, but for her benefite: For, it is for the tryall and exerciſe of her Faith, her loue, and patience. Yea, it is to ſtirre vp and to kindle her affection more vehemently for to ſeeke after him.

Finally, it is to teach all the godly to make precious account of retaining *Chriſt* with them. For when they are fallen into drowſines, and ſo haue leſſe feeling: it is not ſo eaſie a matter to finde the Lord againe. Continue therefore your prayers, and meditations, and all holy exerciſes, by which the liuely feeling of Chriſts preſence is continued.

Well, while ſhee thus ſought him all about, and found him not, the Watchmen that went about the Cittie, found her. The Watch-men in a Cittie doe paſſe too and fro, to ſee if there bee any ſtyrring, whereby hurt may ariſe, and theſe do finde her now in the ſtreetes. Who may theſe Watchmen bee? If

If the cittie bee the visible Church (for the Faithfull do dwell scattered in the visible Church, among many counterfeyte worshippers of *GOD*) then these watchmen are the Pastors, who are to watche ouer the cittie, as the Lord telleth the Prophet *Ezechiel*, that hee had made him a Watchman. But then if it bee so, why doe not these Watch-men leade her vnto *CHRIST*, for that is their office and dutie? Surely, it doth often fall out, that the shepheardes themselues, euen the Watchmen ouer the house of *Israell*, doe not know Christ aright, but are blinded with worldly pompe, and couetousnes. Shee doth demaund of them, if they haue not seen him whom her soule loueth? but there is no mention of her answere. Eyther they made none, or else such an answer as could doe her no good. Well, shee goeth but a little past them, and shee findeth her welbeloued. Then we see plainely, that she findeth him at the last, This is according to the promise. *Aske and ye shal haue, seeke & ye shal finde, knock, & it shal be opened vnto you.* For *whosoeuer asketh, receiueth, & he that seeketh findeth, & to him that knocketh, it shalbe opened.* Math: 7. ver. 7.8.

Here

Heere is a goodly comfort vnto all thoſe which with harty affection do ſeeke after Ieſus Chriſt: for though they ſeem for to loſe their labour, yet let them not faint, nor waxe wearie, for in the end they ſhal finde him. He is not out of the City, albeit the blinde Watchmen doe not ſee him Hee will ſhew himſelfe moſt comfortably vnto them that ſeeke him with an vpright heart, if they giue not ouer. Well are wee if we bee wiſe and ſtrong in this point, for many there bee which bear the name of Chriſtians, which ſeeke not Chriſt at all, but doe deſpiſe & neglect all holy exerciſes.

Others there be which doe ſeeke, but they doe not continue ſeeking, they faint they waxe weary, and ſo giue ouer: becauſe they feele not the quickning power of Chriſt, euen at the firſt, or after ſome ſhort time, they doe euen relent, and giue ouer. Let vs learne here of the Spouſe, not to giue ouer, let vs paſſe all lets, dangers and inconueniences, ſeeing in the end we ſhall not miſſe of him Wee are often brought into doubt of the truth in ſome points, becauſe the Sect-maſters and heretikes doe make ſuch a ſhew of truth

truth for their falſe opinions. Wee are alſo clogged with ſinnefull luſts, which do diſquiet our minds.

Chriſt alone is to ridde vs from all theſe ſnares, and though it ſeeme long oftentimes before we can get out of them: yet in the end we finde deliuerance: for all that finde Chriſt are freede from danger: and he that continueth to the ende he ſhall bee ſaued, Math. 24. But now let euery one beware that they ſeeke the Lord in ſimplicity and ſingleneſſe of heart: for ſuch as are puffed vp with pride and vain glory, when they come vnto any knowledge, fall away againe, and many ſuch there haue euer beene. Of all others, a man would take them to bee the moſt earneſt ſeekers after Chriſt: and in the end, there is euen the dogg to his vomit. They ſeemed to eſchew the filthy pollutions of the world, with an exceeding great lothing and deteſtation, and ſuddenly they doe euen turne backe vnto them, and do become ringleaders vnto ſundry kindes of lewdneſſe. O wicked pride, and vaine glory, whether doeſt thou caſt men? If they had while they did runne in the way, ſought Chriſt in

ſinglenes of heart, ſeeking indeed to bee ridde of their errors, and to haue all euill luſts ſubdued in them, they ſhould not haue miſſed of him.

Behold the cunning of the Diuell in ſetting them ſo on worke: for now if we call vpon men to be zealous and feruent in ſeeking the Lord, they can obiect, What is become of the vehement ſeeking of ſuch and ſuch men? O beloued learne of the Church heere, to continue ſtill our earneſt ſeeking, and learne by the fearefull example of thoſe men, how good it is, to ſeeke with humility, and with all lowlineſſe of mind, not glorying in our ſelus, but in the Lord. Remember that admonition of the bleſſed Apoſtle, who ſayeth, *With feare and trembling worke out your ſaluation: for it is God that worketh in you both the will and the deede, of his good pleaſure*, Phil. 2. 12. 13. Let vs be afraid of our owne affections which are crooked and peruerſe: Let vs not leane vnto our owne reaſon which is blinde, for if wee doe, then ſhall we wilfully, and ſtifly ſtand to maintaine our owne opinions: wee ſhall be ready to ſhew our wit in maintaining errors. Neyther let vs de-

light

light to haue our owne will fulfilled, but bee ready to deny it, that wee may fulfill the holy will of the Lord.

In a word, let vs feare and ſuſpect whatſoeuer is of our ſelues, and ſeeke to be wholy directed and guided by the ſpirite of the Lord. This is the true, and the right ſeeking of Chriſt, and after this manner the holy Spouſe ſeeketh him, and if we continue thus ſeeking, we ſhal with her finde him at the laſt.

Now when ſhe had found him, what doth ſhee then? She telleth vs here what ſhe did. For marke her ſpeech: *I* (ſayth ſhee) *layde holde of him, and left him not, vntill I had brought him vnto my Mothers houſe, into the Chamber of her that conceyued me.* Chriſt is a moſt glorious King, is not this then ouer rude dealing, that ſhe ſayth, ſhe layde holde on him? May the faithfull vſe this boldneſſe? Surely the laying hold on Chriſt is onely by faith, which goeth not with any vnreuerende dealing. and the Lord is ſo farre off from diſallowing it, that it dooth moſt highly pleaſe him. This is the maruellous kindneſſe of our Lord, which Sathan would beare vs in mind by his Miniſters, I mean

the Papists) to bee nothing so. O say they) it is ouermuch sawcinesse for sinnefull men to come directly vnto Christ, and to lay holde on him. It becommeth them in more humble manner to seeke vnto some that be inferiour. Some Saint or Angell which may speake for them: Yea, but doth the holy church here so? no no, she seeketh only after Christ, her mind is bent onely vpon him, and vpon him directly, she layeth hold with the hand of faith, and draweth him vnto her. And he doth not condemne it in her as a rude part, but it is her prayse aud glory, so to lay hold on Christ, and let not vs bee afraide in this pure sort to lay hold on him for you can no way so highly please the Lord, as by laying hold on him with a true and liuely faith.

When the church had sought him vpon her bed, but found him not, when shee had also sought him about in the streetes of the citie, but found him not: now when shee doth finde him, how earnestly she layeth hold on him. Surely, the Lord doth withdraw himselfe sometime from the godly, and as it were hide himselfe, so that they do not feele the comfort and

and peace in him that they would. Then doe they ſeeke him with care and griefe, then alſo miſſing of him, they ſee what it is to want him, and therefore ſo ſoone as euer he ſheweth himſelfe, they ſpeedilie lay holde on him, as hauing found their onely treaſure and felicity. O how the faithfull run vnto Chriſt, and with what earneſt deſire they lay hold on him, that they may ſtill bee partakers of his ſweete and precious comforts. Here alſo wee may note the force & efficacie of the true and liuely faith: how it doth not onely lay hold of the Lord, but alſo keepeth and retaineth him faſt, and will not let him go, for ſo be her words. This is a very marueilons thing, that the Almightie ſhould be ſo held & retained, euen as it were with a violent force and power. But ſurely he hath by his couenant and promiſe bound and tyed himſelfe vnto vs, ſo that whoſoeuer laieth hold of the Lord with the hand of faith, it is vnpoſſible that he ſhould depart from them.

This peraduenture will ſeeme hard vnto ſome, for it may be ſayde, ſhee layeth holde on him, and will not lette him goe, but if hee would, coulde

he not haue brake from her? Becauſe you ſay it is vnpoſſible that hee ſhould depart from them, that lay hold on him with the *Hand of Faith.* Let men conſider, that it is impoſſible that *GOD* ſhould breake his *Couenant* and promiſe; it is vtterly vnpoſſible that God ſhould lye. Well, he hath promiſed, he hath couenanted and ſworn, that all which beleeue in his Sonne, ſhall not be confounded. Wherby it is manifeſt, that *CHRIST* cannot depart from the ſoule which belieueth aright in him: wee are not to take theſe ſpeeches, as if *Chriſt* would depart from any that truſt in him, but onely I do note her ſpeech, when ſhe ſayeth that ſhe did lay holde on him, and would not let him goe: declaring with what force ſhee did holde, and retaine him.

What are wee then more to ſeeke after, then this ſame mightie *Hand of Faith? It is the Rocke, againſt which the Gates of Hell cannot preuaile.* Matth: 16. *It is the ſhielde that quencheth all the fiery Dartes of the euill one:* Epheſ: 6. *It is* (Saint Iohn ſayeth) *Our victorie, by which wee ouercome the Worlde.* 1 Iohn: 5. Then it ſubdueth the prince of this World, it bringeth vnder

der all the power of the Diuell. And as *Iaakob* did wreſtle with the Angell, and would not let him goe: and therefore he called him *Iſraell*, ſaying: *Thou haſt power with GOD, thou ſhalt preuayle with men.* Geneſ: 32.

So all that belieue, bee true *Iſraelites*, they lay holde vpon Chriſt by Faith, they wreſtle and preuaile with God. Great then is the praiſe, and the glorie of *Faith*, which if men did throughly waigh and conſider, they would not be ſo colde and careleſſe in ſeeking after it. They would not bee ſo negligent in reading and hearing of the holy word of *GOD*, with little or no meditation of the ſame. They would not be ſo fainte and feeble in praier, but inſtantly they would call vpon the *LORD*, *to increaſe their Faith*: whereby they may thus preuaile by laying holde of *CHRIST*, & retaining him ſtil with them.

Oh what labour ſhould wee refuſe in this thing? How doe men labour and toyle in the world for to get riches which are trãſitory? Who is able to expreſſe their induſtry and care, how they do beate their brains about it day & night! Would to *God* that we had but halfe ſo much care, & that

we would indeede take but halfe ſo much paines to ſeeke after this rich and incomparable iewell of *Faith*, this *Hand*, which layeth ſo faſt hold on *CHRIST*, that it will not let him goe. Indeed the excellencie of it is in reſpect of him whom it holdeth.

In Chriſt there is all fulneſſe of good things. *Whoſoeuer is in him, there is to them no condemnation.* Rom:8.1. They be moſt happie and bleſſed for euermore: then ſee what this hand obtaineth.

On the other ſide, ſuch as bee not in Chriſt, they bee in their ſinnes, they bee voyde and deſtitute of all good things, they bee vnder condemnation. When Chriſt is layde open, and publiſhed vnto them, ſo that in ſome ſorte they are made to ſee wherein all happines reſteth, where the onely remedie againſt all miſerie is, yet they are neuer the better, they haue no hand to lay holde on Chriſt, nor to retaine him, but they doe ſtill languiſh in their miſeries: For that is proper onely to the Church and her children, which is heere ſpoken: I layd holde on him, and left him not, vntill I had brrought him vnto my Mothers houſe, into the chamber of her that conceyued mee. Againe,

here

here is an effectuall laying holde on him by the Bryde, ſo that ſhee retayneth him to dwell with her for euer, For, that is to bee gathered by this, when ſhee bringeth him vnto her Mothers houſe, and into the chambers of her that conceyued her.

The *Faithfull ſoule* is not contented, neither doth it ſatisfie her in ſome ſleight manner, to lay holde on *CHRIST* for a time, but ſhee will leade him home, euen into the inner-chamber of her minde, that ſo hee may dwell in her, and ſhee in him. Then ſhee liueth, or as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, Chriſt liueth in her. Gal: 2. ver, 20.

The holy Ghoſt calleth vpon men *To open the Gates, and the euerlaſting doores*, That is the dores of their hearts: *and the King of glorie ſhall come in*, Pſalme 24. She doth here open the gates and the doores, and leadeth him in.

What good thing can bee wanting, where the King of glorie entreth for to dwell? He is the Lord of Hoaſts, who is is ſtrong and mightie in Battell. He doth ſubdue ſin & putteth the prince of darkenes to flight, yea, he chaſeth away all euill where he dwelleth. No maruell then that ſhe wil not let him go, but leadeth him in-

to

to the Chambers of her that conceyued her.

This is a great myſtery, and a ſecret: for although men doe profeſſe the name of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt in word, yet for the moſt part they know not what this meaneth. They know not, I ſay, what it is to bring Chriſt home into the Chamber: Hee is in the Heauens a nearer preſence of him they doe neyther feele nor make account of. Chriſt indeede is in their mouth, but the ſpirite of pride, of enuie, of ſelfe loue, of couetouſneſſe, of lechery, and of all vncleanneſſe, yea euen the ſpirit and power of the Diuell dooth dwell in their heart. Their workes doe declare no leſſe, for all their filthy ſpeeches and wicked deedes do manifeſtly ſhew that they bee the children of that wicked one. As you may reade how our Sauior doth reaſon againſt the Iewes, ſaying. *Yee doe the workes of your Father, and you are of your Father the Diuell*, Iohn 8. And S. *Iohn* ſayeth, *Bee not deceyued, hee that worketh righteouſneſſe, is righteous, as he is righteous, hee that committeth ſinne is of the diuell*, 1. Iohn 3. verſ. 7. 8. If you will then be the true children of the Church, laye hold

hold on Christ, and bring him home into your hearts, that there his life and power may appeare.

But as it was sayde, heere it may now bee demaunded, what mother hath the Church? Who is shee that conceyued her? Is there any Spouse of Christ but one? I answere, there is but one church, one mysticall body of Christ, and one Spouse: but alwayes that part of the church, which is vpon earth, is called the daughter of the Church of former times. As we see how the generations passe away and euermore there arise vp new, which for the time are as a young virgin, and daughter to the former. There is a continuall succession, and the Church doth euermore bring foorth vnto the Lord, so that euermore the church heere in the world may say, shee leadeth Christ into the chambers of her that conceyued her. And here is also to be noted, that shee leadeth him not vnto a strange habitation, but vnto the same, where her mother did entertaine him. For there is one faith, one hope, one doctrine, and therefore euery church for the time vpon earth entertayneth Christ as her mother before her did.

And

And in very deede, if you will approue your ſelues to be right Chriſtians, looke to the ſteppes of the ancient Chriſtians, euen of the mother churches vnder the Prophets and Apoſtles, and doe euen as they did.

And now ſee what followeth: *I charge you, O daughters of Ieruſalem by the roes, & by the Hindes of the field, that yee ſtirre not vp, nor wake my loue vntill ſhee pleaſe.* I noted before, that it is doubtfull whether Chriſt or the church did vtter this ſpeech: for the word (*loue*) is feminine, and ſo may bee taken of Chriſt. Indeed it ſeemeth in this place to bee the ſpeech of the Bride: for hauing with long ſeeking found her welbeloued, and brought him home vnto her mothers houſe, ſhee is much afraide, leaſt he ſhould haue any occaſion giuen him to depart, or to withdraw himſelfe from her, and therefore layeth this ſtraight charge vpō ther daughters, euen binding them with an oath, to beware leaſt they awake and ſtirre him vp before he pleaſe: For as I noted before in the other chapter, where wee had this charge euen word for word, The daughters of *Ieruſalem* are to take heed

leaſt

leaſt by their rude and vnreuerent behauiour, they doe cauſe the Lord for to depart, ſeeing that when hee doth, as it were, hide himſelfe from his church, ſo that hee ſuffereth great affliction, it is for the euill behauiour of manie, which profeſſe his name. The Lord giue vs his abound-dant grace, and make vs carefull to re-taine him,

Amen.

THE

The sixt Sermon.

CHAP. III.

6 *Who is shee that commeth vp out of the wildernesse like pillars of smoake, perfumed with Myrrhe and Incence, and with all the spices of the Marchant.*

7 *Behold his bed which is Salomons, three score strong men are round about it, of the valiant men of Israel.*

8 *They all handle the sword, and are expert in warre, euery man hath his sword vpon his thigh, for the feare by night.*

9 *King Salomon made himselfe a Pallace of the trees of Lebanon.*

10 *Hee made the pillars thereof of siluer, and the pauement thereof of gold, the hangings thereof of purple, whose middest was paued with the loue of the daughters of Ierusalem.*

11 *Come*

11 *Come foorth, yee daughters of Zion, and behold the King Salomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his marriage, and in the day of the gladnes of his heart.*

THe church ſought Chriſt and neuer gaue ouer ſeeking vntill ſhe had found him, and brought him home vnto her mothers houſe, into the chambers of her that conceyued her. Chriſt indeed ſheweth himſelfe preſent vnto his deare Spouſe here below, but not that ſhe is to make account that his ſpeciall abode with her, is here on earth, but that ſhee muſt aſcend vp vnto his houſe, euen vnto the chambers of the heauenly pallace, for to that end and purpoſe doth hee come downe vnto her. Here therefore is ſhewed the effect of this her finding and laying hold of him, namely, that hee hath perfumed her with his ſweet graces, and made her fit and meete to aſcend vp with him vnto his royall pallace which is here deſcribed.

Come then vnto the words, *Who is ſhe*

ſhee that aſcendeth vp out of the wilderneſſe &c. The Bridegroome, (as it ſeemeth) doth vtter this ſpeech, not being ignorant, or hauing the leaſt doubt who ſhee is, but in way of admiration or wonderment, to draw vs to the due conſideration of the greatneſſe, and excellency of the thing.

It is no ſmall worke that the Bride, euen the whole company of the faithfull doe in heart and mind aſcend vp into the heauens. Our affections, and all the powers of our mind are wholy of themſelues bent downewards to this world, euen to the earth and earthly things. It is Chriſt then that maketh her to aſcend vp out of the wilderneſſe: It is the mighty power and operation of his grace. For marke how when ſhee had ſo earneſtly ſought after him, when at the laſt ſhee had found him, when ſhe had layde holde on him, and would not let him goe vntill ſhe had brought him vnto her mothers houſe, and euen into the chambers, how it followeth by and by: Who is this that aſcendeth vp out of the wilderneſſe? This is that I ſayde, Chriſt commeth downe vnto his Spouſe here on earth, that hee may cauſe her

her to mount vp into the Heauens, which wee ſee doth follow: ſuch is the power & effectuall working of his grace. But what is the wilderneſſe out of which ſhe aſcendeth? It is the world, euen the corrupt & miſerable eſtate that we are all in by nature. In a wilderneſſe there is no tilling, no ſowing, no planting, no dreſſing, no good fruit, but all lyeth waſte, barren and deſolate. Euen ſo it is with all mankind, by nature there is nothing but barrennes, God planteth, tilleth and dreſſeth his church, ſhe is, as Saint *Paul* ſayeth, 1. *Cor.* 3. Gods husbandrie, ſhee is made fruitefull to the Lord: but the whole Worlde beſide, out of which ſhe aſcendeth, doth remaine as a moſt deſolate and barren wilderneſſe. There groweth not in it any one ſweet thing at all, but all noyſome ſtinking and abominable weedes. All the godly which are here repreſented vnder the perſon of the Spouſe, doe aſcend out of this barren gulfe.

And the worke is wonderfull and maruellous, but eſpecially if you marke how ſhee aſcendeth vp. It is ſayde, euen *like pillars of ſmoake.* What meaneth this? That muſt you gather by the words that

follow which are theſe. *Perfumed with myrrhe and incence, and with all the ſpices of the Marchants,* or as it may rightly bee tranſlated, more excellent then all the duſt of the Marchant.

The godly doe not while they liue here aſcend vp in body into the heauens: but their faith, their hope, their loue, their prayers and thankſgiuing, with ſuch like, doe like pillars of ſmoke of ſweet incenſe aſcend vp before the Lord: and all theſe pillars of ſmoke of ſweet odors ariſe from hence, that Chriſt hath perfumed her with the heauenly graces of his Spirit, which he calleth myrrhe and incenſe, which hee ſayeth doth excell all the duſt, that is to ſay, all the ſweet ſpices of the Marchant: Shee is then perfumed with the graces of Chriſt, and ſo made ſweet and fitte to aſcend vp to God in the heauens. Shee aſcendeth vp out of a wilderneſſe, where no good nor ſweet thing groweth, and yet ſhee aboundeth with all ſweet perfumes, which aſcend vp euen like vnto pillars of ſmoke,

Is not this a wonderfull thing? From whence hath ſhee theſe ſweet fruites in the wilderneſſe? Euen as I tolde you before,

Shee

Shee ſought him whom her ſoule loueth, yea, ſhee neuer gaue ouer ſeeking, vntill ſhee found him, ſhee layde holde on him, and would not let him depart: and heere is the fruit of her labour, he perfumeth her with all ſweet and precious things, and maketh her fit for to aſcend vp into the Heauens. O beloued, ſhall not this enflame our minds to ſeeke after Chriſt, and neuer to giue ouer for any trauell, inconuenience or danger, vntill we find him? Yea to lay faſt hold on him, and to retaine him, that hee may thus perfume vs with his ſpirite and gracious gifts, and ſo make vs fitte to dwell with him in the Heauens? In our ſelues, and of our own nature wee ſtinke, we are loathſome and abominable, fit for the ſtinking pit of hel, and not meet for to aſcend vp into the heauenly pallaces. If we finde him, and as the holy Spouſe ſayth, lay hold on him and retayne him, he will indeed perfume vs, and make vs full of all ſweet thinges, through which wee ſhall bee acceptable vnto God. They are worthy to lye and rot in their filthineſſe, and ſo with deteſtation to be caſt out of the preſence of the Lord, who will not ſeeke vp ſo ſweete

and gracious a Sauiour. What is the cauſe that men generally are ſo addicted vnto this World, ſo that they doe not aſcend vp out of it? And what is the reaſon that they bee not perfumed with ſweet things, but doe caſt forth continually the ſtinke of vncleane and abominable vices: Surely euen this, they doe not with the holy Bride ariſe out of their beds to ſeek Chriſt and neuer ceaſe vntill they haue found him. No, no, there is ſmall and cold ſeeking after him. I would to God it might enter into our minds, and bee throughly fixed in vs, what a treaſure ſhall wee obtaine when we finde him. Some will reply, that they ſeeke him, but they cannot finde thoſe things which the Spouſe here found. It may be (ſay they) Chriſt wil not bee found of all that ſeeke him. They could bee content for to ſeeke him more erneſtly, if they were ſure that they ſhould finde him.

Surely, this is the tempter, this is our owne negligence and vnbeliefe, and it is very good for vs to beware of it. Wee ſee what wonderfull goodly things they attaine vnto which finde Chriſt, laying holde on him, and not leauing him. Wee

ſee

ſee alſo by the ſpeeches of the Spouſe, that he is not eaſily found. If wee ſeeke a little, and in cold manner, euen as it were vpon our bed, becauſe we finde him not, wee are ready to imagine, and the Diuell doth alſo ſuggeſt, that it is but loſt labour for to ſeeke him. But doubtleſſe all thoſe that ſeeke him in vprightneſſe of heart, & that ſeeke him diligently and carefully, not giuing ouer, ſhall finde him. Is it not his promiſe? *Seeke and you ſhall find, aske and you ſhall receiue, knocke and it ſhall bee opened vnto you? For whoſoeuer asketh receiueth, and he that ſeeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened,* Math. 7.7.8. If therefore we haue ſought, and yet finde not that we are perfumed with myrrhe and incenſe, ſweeter then all the ſpices of the Marchant, and that wee doe aſcend vp out of this barren wildernes, let vs know that we haue not ſought ſo feruently as wee ought to ſeeke: Let vs then be more diligent.

It followeth, *Behold his bedde which is Salomons. threeſcore ſtrong men are round about it of the valiant men of Iſrael. They all handle the Sworde, and are expert in warre: euery man hath*

his sword vpon his thigh for feare by night.

It was sayde in the former verse, that shee ascended vp out of the wildernesse: And whether doth shee ascend, but vnto the habitation of the great King her Spouse, to lodge and to dwell with him for euer? Here is therefore vnder a shadow a description of that heauenly lodging. The shadow is taken from the bride bed, and from the Bride-bed of King *Salomon.* For Christ is the true *Salomon*, euen the King of peace, of whom *Salomon* that wrote this Song was a figure. It was, and is the manner, that Kings haue euery night a watch about their lodging, by part of their guard, that there be no treason wrought, but that the King may sleepe without feare. It seemeth by this place that King *Salomon* had euery night threescore valiant men of his guard, expert in battell, and with their swordes girded to their thigh, that did keepe the watch, that so hee might sleepe in safety. And because it falleth out sometimes, that treacheries be committed by some that are put in trust to watch and to guard: heere is mention made, that these are of the valiant men

men of Iſrael, they bee true hearted and truſty. Needfull it is that they ſhould bee no weak ones, nor no cowardly perſons: and more needfull it is alſo, that they ſhould be in a readineſſe, and haue theyr weapons prepared, and moſt needfull of all, that they bee ſuch as will not bee corrupted any way, but haue faithfull hearts. If they were mighty and valiant men, and right well appointed, and not of the valiant men of *Iſrael*, that is to ſay, ſound & true harted, the danger were the greater. But *Salomons* bed is ſafely guarded with theſe valiant men of *Iſrael*, wher by is figured, how ſafely from all danger and feare, the Church ſhall reſt with Chriſt in the heauens. Heere bee many enemies which ſeek to deſtroy the church Satan the Prince of darkeneſſe with all his Angels, and with all the infernal powers wayteth day and night to worke all the miſchiefe that he can. Hee raiſeth vp cruell and bloudy tyrants which breath out threatnings and terror, as if they wold vtterly ſeparate her from Chriſt. But when the faithfull haue found Chriſt, and hee hath ſo repleniſhed them with the gifts and graces of his Spirite, that they

mount vp into the heauens by a true and liuely faith, with feruent zeale and vehement affection, then howsoeuer they bee troubled, molested, afflicted, and disquieted here in the world, yet they rest safe, and in peace with him aboue. That place is safely guarded, thither can no enemy approach to worke any mischiefe, or to put the Spouse in any feare. He, euen that heauenly *Salomon*, is guarded with his mighty Angels, which are ministring spirits, sent forth to minister for their sakes, which shall inherite saluation, Heb. 1. These be true Israelites indeed, holy, and faithfull: no vnfaithfulnesse can come neere vnto them.

Let vs therefore touching this point remember these words of our Sauiour vnto his Apostles, when he was euen ready to depart from them out of this world saying, *These thinges haue I spoken vnto you, that in me yon might haue peace, in the world you shall haue affliction: but bee of good comfort, for I haue ouercome the world*, Iohn 16. verse 33. Then howsoeuer the case doth stand with the godly heere in the world, they rest in safety and peace with Christ. But this is not all which the

Bride

Bride ſhall obtaine, by her aſcending vp out of the wilderneſſe, vnto the pallace of her Welbeloued, for it falleth out that one may dwell ſafe from danger, and bee well guarded in a place of ſmall eaſe and pleaſure: marke therefore what a deſcription now followeth of the heauenly Bride-chamber, how rich, how goodly and precious it is to dwell in. For here it is figured by King *Salomons* Bride-chamber. K. *Salomon made himſelfe* (ſayeth our Engliſh tranſlation) *a place of the trees of Lebanon.* Some take it to bee a Coach, in which hee was carried with his Queene: The word is *apirion*, which is not found elſe where in all the holy Scriptures. It is deriued of *Parah*, which ſignifieth to flouriſh and bring foorth fruit. So that moſt fitly it may bee heere taken for a royall and ſumptuous Bride chamber, which King *Salomon* built in his owne Pallace.

The bride chamber (which was for the daughter of *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, whom Salomon married, and for whom hee built an houſe, as the holy Scripture doth witnes, 1. Kin. 19. v. 24) Touching the timber, it was of the trees of *Lebanon*, that

that is of goodly Cedars. for Lebanon in the Scriptures is renowned for Cedars: That kinde of Wood is very durable. Then it is saide, that *the pillars were of siluer, and the Pauement of Golde, and the Hangings of purple.* Here is a goodly rich thing, and pleasant to lodge in. And then it is added further, *whose middest was paued with the loue of the daughters of Ierusalem,* This is more darke to be vnderstood then the rest. The middest is to be taken for the inwarde partes of this Chamber, which is paued with loue, (that is, as wee may vnderstand it) wrought with louely, or most excellent works, by the daughters of Ierusalem. For so I take it, this latter clause is most fitly to be translated: rather then to say of the daughters of Ierusalem. For hee speaketh of the excellent needle workes, of the stuffe and furniture, which the skilfullest needle-women in Ierusalem had wrought. Heere then are all things rich and sumptuous: yea, these things are rare and excellent, euen among the greatest Princes of the world. For the glorie of King *Salomon* did excell, hee being a figure of the heauenly King of glorie, our Lorde Iesus Christ: but they are scarse wor-

worthy to be named, or eſteemed to be a ſhadow of that Heauenly-palace, which is here reſembled by them. For what are Buyldings of *Cedar?* what is ſiluer, or golde, or purple? yea, what are all the fineſt Needle-workes vnto that Heauenly habitation of Chriſt, in which his Church ſhall dwell with him for euer? Wee ſee alſo how the new Ieruſalem, the cittie of God, is ſhewed vnto S. Iohn in a viſion: *Reuel.* 21. and there deſcribed to be moſt rich and precious, as beeing of moſt pure gold, ſhining through like Criſtall, and of pearle. Then beſides the ſafetie, that the godly ſhall reſt in with Chriſt, where no aduerſe power ſhall approach any way to hurt or annoy them, their dwelling ſhall be alſo moſt delectable and glorious.

True it is, that *Salomons* Queene did dwell in a Palace very goodly and ſumptuous, and ſuch as the very kings and Princes of the Earth might euer wonder at: ſo great was the glory and royaltie which his God gaue him. But yet the ſame Palace that ſhee dwelt in, and all her glory, was nothing to the Pallace which Chriſt hath prepared for his beloued Spouſe, the church. Then is there ſufficient cauſe to

moue

moue all the children of God to aſcend vp out of this wildernes, vnto this Heauenly palace. And aboue all things, let vs mark this well, into what manner of place, and vnto what manner of perſon we muſt aſcend vp vnto: for that will put vs in minde, what manner of perſons we ought to bee: vncleane perſons are not meete to enter, and dwell in ſuch a palace: As it is written, *There ſhall enter into it no vncleane thing, neyther whatſoeuer worketh abhomination or lyes.* Reuel. 21. 27.

And iudge in your ſelues; are the vnholie, that ſtinke in their wickednes, in any ſorte to be ioyned vnto the Lord Ieſus Chriſt? No verily brethren, all that ſhall dwell with him, muſt be ſweet and cleane. And therefore marke how the Spouſe is ſaide *to aſcende vp out of the Wildernes, perfumed with Myrrhe and Incenſe, ſweeter then all the ſpices of the Merchant.* Shee is decked and made ſweete, to goe dwell in ſuch a place, and with ſuch a perſon.

Oh Lorde, how little is this regarded? It doeth pleaſe men well, to heare that the heauenly Habitation is prepared, and that the godlie ſhall there dwell with Chriſt their King in euerlaſting glorie.

And

And ſome other ſpeeches they caſte foorth, expreſſing a deſire to come to the ſame: but where are they almoſt, which ſeeke to bee perfumed, and made ſweete, and fitte to goe vp thither?

Doo not manie, which profeſſe that they hope to goe thither, and to dwell with the Lord of glorie: yet ſtill continue in their vncleanneſſe, and doe not ſeeke to purge themſelues, and to be perfumed with the ſweete graces of the Holie-Ghoſt.

Theſe ſay that they looke for the life to come: But I pray you, can it bee ſayde of them, that they aſcende vp perfumed, with Myrrhe and Incenſe? There are none that aſcend vp to Heauen, but they that are ſweete. Such filthie ſlouens are fitte to dwell in the ſtinking dungeon of Hell, and thither they ſhalbe thruſt, vnles that they repent, and alter their manners.

Now let vs come to the laſt verſe of this chapter: which is in theſe wordes: *Come forth ye daughter of Zion, and behold the king* Salomon *with the Crowne, wherewith his Mother crowned him, in the day of his Maryage; and in the day of the gladneſſe of his heart.* Firſt, it is not eaſie to proue or to ſhew

ſhew for certainety, who vttereth this ſpeech. Wee ſee it is directed vnto the daughters of *Zion*: the ſumme of it is to incite them to come forth, and to behold the glory of King *Salomon*: and by king *Salomon* is meant the Lord Ieſus: hee is the true *Salomon*, hee is the King of peace. It is then his crowne and glory, which theſe daughters of *Zion* are willed to com forth and behold.

It is not like then that Chriſt vttereth this, but rather we may take it to bee the ſpeech of the Church vnto all her daughters. Here may ariſe another doubt: Is Chriſt this King *Salomon*, that is crowned with honour and glory in the day of his marriage? Is he crowned by his mother? Who is this his mother? And how doth ſhee ſet this crowne vpon his head? And when was he married? True it is, that the holy Scriptures doe ſet foorth that Chriſt, is as yet but betrothed, and that as wee haue ſhewed before, the day of his marriage ſhall be at the laſt day, euen at the end of this world. How then are they willed to behold that glory before it come? I anſwere that the words may be tranſlated more rightly thus, *In the day of*

his

his betrothing. but if we will take it as it is translated, *In the day of his marriage*, ye must know, that faith beholdeth thinges inuisible, and things to come.

And touching this question, who is that his mother that doth crowne him. Or let it be that the mother of King *Salomon* did in the day that he was betrothed, or when the marriage day was, set a crowne vpon his head: yet this we know, that it is *God which crowneth Iesus with honour and glory*, as we reade Psalme 8. and Heb. 2.9. It is most true that God hath aduanced Iesus Christ, and set the crowne of glory vpon him: that is out of controuersie: and yet withal his mother doth also after a sort set the crowne of glory vpon his head. *Seeing the Church is the fulnesse of him that filleth all in all*, Ephes. 1. ver. 23.

The Church doth honour and glorifie Christ, and the Church sometimes is set forth to be the mother of Christ, Reu. 12. But to let passe these things, let vs consider, that which is the chief and principall matter in this sentence, how we are called vpon to come forth, and to beholde this glory of Christ. For all the faithfull soules bee the daughters of *Zion*. And looke

looke how the daughters of *Ieruſalem*, ſitting or remaining in their houſes, in their chambers and cloſets, could not beholde the glory of King Salomon, and therefore they be willed to com forth of their dores euen ſo, if we will behold the great King in his moſt excellent glory, we muſt com out of our ſelues, otherwiſe wee cannot ſee his glory.

We are in our ſelues ſhut vp in a dark dungeon, wee are called vpon to come forth into the cleare light of faith, and to remoue away thoſe thick wals of the fleſh, which are betweene our ſight & Chriſt. Moſt true it is, that whoſoeuer doe not come forth of themſelues, but will ſeeke Chriſt in their owne reaſon and carnall imaginations, they cannot behold his glory. This is a matter of great importance, and by no meanes to be neglected: for if you haue a deſire to be drawne out of this vaine world, in our affections and deſires, then are wee to goe forth, and to behold the glory of Chriſt: for what can moue or draw vs more then this, whē we behold the greatnes of his glory, & conſider withall, that hee is crowned therewith, euen to this end, that wee may be

partakers with him in the ſame.

You ſee then, that it is vnto ſpeciall purpoſe that wee are called vpon for to come forth, and with the eyes of faith to behold in dayly meditation the glory of Chriſt Ieſus, in which his Church ſhall raigne with him. If wee doe this, we ſhall eaſily deſpiſe all the glory & pleaſures of this world, as droſſe. O Lorde worke it in vs,

Amen.

N THE

The ſeuenth Sermon.

CHAP. IIII.

1 *Behold thou art fayre my loue, behold thou art fayre, thine eyes are as the Doues: among thy lockes, thy hayre is like the flocke of goates, which looke downe from the mountaines of Gilead.*

2 *Thy teeth are like a flocke of ſheepe in good order. which goe vp from the waſhing, which euery one bring out two twinnes, and none is barren among them.*

3 *Thy lippes are like a thread of skarlet, and thy talke is comely, thy Temples are within thy locks, as a peece of a Pomegranate.*

4 *Thy necke is as the Tower of Dauid, built for defence, a thouſand ſhields hang therein, euen all the targets of the mighty men.*

5 *Thy two breſts are as two young Roes that are twinnes, feeding among the Lillies.*

6 *Vntill*

6 *Vntill the day breake, and the ſhadows flye away, I will goe to the mountaines of Myrrhe, and to the mountaine of Incenſe.*

7 *Thou art all fayre my loue, and there is no ſpot in thee.*

8 *Come with me from Lebanon my ſpouſe, euen with me from Lebanon, looke from the toppe of Amanah, from the toppe of Shenir & Hermon, from the dens of the Lions, and from the mountaines of Leopards.*

His Chapter, euen all the whole except two verſes, the 15. and 16 is the ſpeech of the Bridegroome, conſiſting in prayſes and commendations of the Bride, in declaration of his loue towardes her, and in promiſes made vnto her. Theſe three things bee exceeding comfortable, and may indeede if wee bee not too too dull, euen glad our hearts. For conſider that he is the King of glory, and who is able to ſet foorth the excellency of his beauty? Shal it not then ſeeme a great thing vnto vs, that he being in the very toppe and height of all glory,

doth ſo admire the beauty of the church and is ſo greatly delighted with it, and promiſeth to take her into his preſence? This will appeare more in the particulars thus he beginneth to prayſe her beauty: *Behold thou art fayre my Loue, behold thou art fayre.* This is a generall commendation, and that which followeth, is a prayſe by ſeueral and particular parts. How great and excellent the beauty is of the whole Church, and ſo of euery faithfull ſoule, doth appeare by this, that hee doth as it were wonder thereat, and repeateth and doubleth his ſpeech, *Behold thou art fayre my loue, behold thou art fayre.* For when the Scripture ſayth *behold*, it noteth for the moſt part a thing to be wondred at, and the doubling of the ſpeech doth augment the matter. But here lyeth the chiefe thing to be conſidered, that ſuch a one as our Lord Ieſus dooth wonder at her beauty. Such as be brought vp in a poore baſe & beggerly condition, if they chance to ſee one in goodly rich attire, doe wonder thereat. But let the ſame perſon ſo richly decked, come into the preſence of a glorious Emperour, and hee doth not wonder, vnleſſe indeed the decking bee

excee,

exceeding great. The poor and of meane eſtate may wonder at a little, but hee cannot. Euen ſo may you conſider it in our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, for he dwelleth in glory anp beauty vnſpeakable, and yet as it were, wondreth at the beauty of his Spouſe, which is a ful declaration, that her beauty excelleth.

What ſhould more enflame our hearts vnto vertue and true godlineſſe, then this, that it maketh men ſo fayre and precious in the eyes of the Lord? But whence hath the ſpouſe this beauty? I need not ſtand to ſhew againe, that he of one that was foule ſtinking and deformed, hath made her cleane, ſweet and beautifull: for all her beauty is from him. It will further be obiected, that this is ſpoken of the Church militant vpon earth, in which euen the perfecteſt haue greateſt deformities, how then can hee ſay, *Behold thou art fayre my Loue, behold thou art fayre?* I aunſwer that the Lord beholdeth his ſpouſe, not in her ſelfe, but in himſelfe, that is vvaſhed, iuſtified, ſanctified, decked and cloathed vvith his graces. Thus much touching the generall commendation: Novv to that vvhich is by the particular

parts, first, we are to remember that all the true beliuers are knit together by one ſpirite, and doe make one myſticall bodie in Chriſt Ieſus: 1. *Cor.* 12, *verſe.* 13.

So then as there be in the naturall body of a man, diuerſe members, which according to their ſeuerall giftes, haue diuerſe functions and operations: the holy Ghoſt aſcribeth the like to the myſticall bodie, as S. *Paul* ſetteth forth at large, 1. *Cor.* 12.

Then further wee are to obſerue, that thoſe are of right ſingular beautie, which are beautifull and comely in all parts. If one parte be comely, and another deformed, then there is no perfect Beautie. But the Church iuſtified and ſanctified in Chriſt, is glorious in all parts.

Our Sauiour here doth begin with the Eyes, ſaying: *thine eyes are as the Doues*: as much as to ſay, thine eyes are like to the eies of the doues: of all partes in the humaine body, if the Face be not comely, beautiful, and well-fauoured, there is little, or no reckoning made. And of all partes in the face, the Eyes are a principall Ornament if they bee beautifull, and a chiefe deformitie to the whole, if they be not.

Now the Eyes of the Church are heere com-

mended, by comparing them to the eyes of Doues, which are chaſte, ſimple, and very beautifull to looke vpon. What ſhall wee take theſe Eyes to bee?

It ſhould ſeeme by S. *Paule*, 1. *Cor.* 12. that the Paſtors and Teachers are the eyes in the Church: For, they are to giue light vnto the whole bodie, through the Heauenly and pure doctrine, and ſo I take it heere: But I take it rather in this place, that the *Eyes* are true and liuely Faith, in all the godly: for by Faith wee looke vp vnto the Lorde, and beholde things inuiſible. Doubtles this *Eye of Faith* is ſimple, it is chaſte, it is very beautifull and precious in Gods ſight. *Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, as it is written. *Hebr.* 11, *verſ.* 6.

Let vs ſtudie and labour then, by all poſſible meanes to get this precious iewell, & euen to be rich in it. Would you not be glad to caſt vp ſuch an Eye vnto the Lord, as hee may be pleaſed and delighted withall, as with an Eye that is ſimple, chaſte, and beautifull.

The next clauſe is in theſe words, *Among thy lockes*, which is expounded diuerſly. For ſome doe take it to ſignifie that the

locks of hayre hang downe, ſo as the Eyes do appeare from within them. And other are of this minde, that hee ſaith, beſide thy lockes, or as it were thy lockes remoued. Howſoeuer it is, this is moſt certaine, that according to the maner of the attire which the chaſte virgins did vſe about their hayre for modeſtie and comelynes, the Bryde is here commended. Then hee addeth, *thy hayre is like a flocke of Goates, which looke downe from the mount Gylead.*

It is taken, that by the hayre, are meant the multitude of the Faithfull, eſpecially when they be aſſembled to heare the *word*, and other holy exerciſes of religion. And it is fitly reſembled by a flocke of Goates, feeding vpon mount Gilead. That mountaine was fruitful with wholſome paſture, and a goodly ſight it was to beholde a flocke of goates ſpread all abroad, and feeding therevpon. Where the Lordes people are aſſembled and are fed with the heauenly foode, it is in his eyes a goodly, and and a comely thing: Alſo happie are they who with the choſen doe aſſemble vppon his holie Mountaine, and there taſte of the ſpirituall Foode, to the ſatisfying of their ſoules.

In

In the next place, hee commendeth the Teeth, saying: *Thy Teeth are like a flocke of sheepe in good order*, or rather, which are equall, *which goe vp from the washing, which euery one bring out twinnes, and none is barren among them.*

As touching the Teeth in the naturall body, the comelynes and beautie of them is in these three things: first, that they bee euen, or of equall length and bignes: secondly, that they bee white and cleane: thirdly, that each rowe answere fitly to the other, and none be wanting.

To set forth these things, they be likened to a flock of sheepe, which be of equall stature, or of an euen bignes, that is for the first. Then that they come vp from the washing: so that being euen newly washed, they be white & cleane, that is the second. In the last place as twinnes, are answerable one to the other, so in the two rowes euery tooth meeteth fit with another, & so there is no gappe, there is none wanting.

Now it may be demaunded. What are the Teeth of the holie Church? To answere this, wee must consider, that the Lorde giueth a Spirituall Foode vnto his Church, which euery Faithfull soule fee-

feedeth vpon. This foode is the Lord Ie-ſus himſelfe? *Hee is the bread of life that came downe from heaueu.* Iohn 6. And becauſe hee is fedde vpon through faith, *And faith commeth by hearing of the Worde* Rom. 10. The holy word of God is called alſo the food of our ſoules, for Saint *Peter* calleth it the *ſincere milke which hee willeth vs to couet as new borne babes, that wee may grow thereby,* 1. *Pet.* 2. *ver.* 1. And Saint Paul telleth the Corinthians, *That they were carnall, euen babes in Chriſt, and that he gaue them milke to drinke, and not ſtrong meate,* 1. *Cor.* 3. Where wee may ſee that the word of God, for the diuerſe manner of the deliuering of it, is milke, and it is ſtrong meate.

Hereupon the Teachers are called Paſtors, that is to ſay, feeders of the flocks. Now by the teeth of the Church we may very well vnderſtand thoſe graces which are giuen vnto euery faithfull ſoule, by which the ſoule hath power to feed vpon the Word, and vpon Chriſt. Or by the teeth may well be vnderſtood the godly and faithfull Paſtors, who as Saint *Paul* ſpeaketh, *doe cut and diuide the word of truth aright vnto the people.*

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It followeth, *Thy lips are like a threed of skarlet.* Here are two things commended in the lips, as that they be ſmall, which is reſembled by a thred, and that they bee of red colour, and therefore he mentioneth skarlet. And if a virgin be neuer ſo beautifull, if her ſpeech bee rude and vnpleaſant, it diſgraceth all: therefore hee addeth, *thy ſpeech is comely.* The ſpeech of man declareth what is in the heart: for our Sauiour ſayth, *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.* And a good man out of the good treaſure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an euill man out of the euill treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth euil things. By nature there is nothing in mans heart but that which is corrupt and abominable, and ſo in all men, as the Apoſtle ſayeth, *The poyſon of Aſpes is vnder their lips*, Rom. 3. But by the operation of the holy Spirit, the harts of the faithfull are repleniſhed with faith, with loue, with zeale, and with many goodly vertues, and then the ſpeech is according. Wherefore he ſayth, *thy ſpeech is comely.*

Let men conſider this well, for many men make ſmall reckoning of ſpeech.

Words

Words say they (when they vtter all the vanity and filthinesse of their mind) are no harme.

Tell them that men shall giue an account at the day of iudgement for euerie idle word, and they will iestingly answer, that God hath greater matters to looke after, then to take account of idle words. Let these alone in their filthines, it behoueth euery one that will be acceptable vnto Christ, and beautifull in his eyes, to haue comely speech. Then he addeth, *Thy temples art within thy lockes, as a peece of Pomegranate.* This is to be vnderstood both of the temples, and of the cheekes, & their beauty is commended, that together with the fayre white there is a mixture of red. That he sayeth, *within thy locks* it is the same word which he vseth before about the eyes. And as I noted, it is taken diuersly. Eyther that the lockes did hang vpon the temples, and so to take it, that they bee within the lockes, or from within the lockes, that is, the lockes being remoued. Howsoeuer it is, as I sayd, before, this is certaine, that the modestie the chast and comely manner of wearing of lockes is here commended.

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In the next place hee commeth to the necke, ſaying, *Thy necke is like to the tower of Dauid, built for a defence, a thouſand ſhields hang therein, euen all the targets of the mighty men.* It doth appeare plainely by this place, that King *Dauid* built a tower in *Ieruſalem* for an armorie: it is tranſlated in our Engliſh, for defence: but the word doth ſignifie, for the hanging vp of ſharpe weapons, or weapons that had edge. And therefore is moſt fitly to be called an Armory. Alſo that which followeth, maketh the matter cleare, that he ſayth, *a thouſand ſhields hang therein, euen all the targets of the mighty men.* Then in this Tower were layde vp the chiefe weapons of warre, vntill ſuch time as there ſhould bee vſe for them. Vnto this Tower doth the Lorde compare the necke of his Church. It is long, ſtraight, and furniſhed with goodly things. To apply this vnto ſome ſeueral perſons or functions in the Church, I will not curiouſly ſtand: but beſides the beauty and ſtately comelineſſe, I take it heere is meant the force and power of the whole armour of God, which the holy Apoſtle Paul ſetteth foorth, Epheſians 6. which indeede

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the Lord doth arme all the faithfull withall, that they may be able to ſtand againſt all the aſſaults of the Diuell. The ſhields and targets of the valiant men of *Iſrael* were in the tower of *Dauid:* but in the Church is the armour and power of the mighty God.

Now to the breaſts: *Thy two breaſtes*, (ſayeth he) *are as two young Roes that are twinnes, feeding among the Lillies.* The breaſts in a woman are for to nouriſh the Infants which ſhe bringeth forth. And the Church is the mother of al Gods children when they be regenerate, ſhe doth nurſe them vp, and for that cauſe there are two breaſtes aſcribed vnto her. Moſt certaine it is, that whoſoeuer will grow vp in the Lord he muſt ſucke his ſpirituall nouriſhment from thoſe breaſts. They bee here highly commended, as to be like vnto two young Roes that bee twinnes. They be like one another, they bee full of very ſweet nouriſhment, as Roes that feede in a pleaſant paſture. Theſe breſts of the Church are ſayde by Interpretors to bee the two Teſtaments of the Lord, the olde and the new. And very agreeable to truth it is ſo to take them, ſeeing

the church doth not bring forth any children to God, nor nouriſh them with her owne doctrine, but with the moſt ſweet and wholeſome doctrine of the Lord. The two Teſtaments indeed, the old and the new, may very well be compared vnto twinnes, they agree, they both ſet forth one heauenly doctrine, the one confirmeth the other. If any one will obiect and ſay, theſe doe containe the counſell and will of God, It is onely the doctrine of the Lord which they ſet foorth, how then can they be called the breaſts of the Church? I anſwere that the like may bee obiected touching any one thing which is prayſed in her: for all that is beautifull and excellent in her, is of grace, and freely beſtowed vpon her by Chriſt. All the holy bookes then of the olde Teſtament and of the new, euen the writings of the Prophets and Apoſtles, are the two breſts of the Church: and from them onely wee muſt ſucke the ſincere milke of the word, by which we are to grow.

Thus farre the Lord hath commended his Spouſe by ſeueral parts, not proſecuting euery particular, but adding in the next verſe ſaue one, that *ſhee is all faire*

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and no ſpot in her, which wee will handle, when wee come vnto it.

Now to that which followeth next: *Vntill the day breake, and the ſhadowes flye away, I will goe to the mountaine of myrrhe, and to the mountaine of Incenſe.* Wee haue in the end of the ſecond Chapter ſhewed what day it is which is ſpoken of, when he ſayth, *vntill the day breake*: for there the Spouſe did entreat her welbeloued, that vntill the day breake, and the ſhadowes flye away, he would returne, and bee like a young Roe vppon the mountaines of Bether.

And here the Bridegroome ſeemeth to anſwer vnto her requeſt. It may be referred, (as I ſayde) to the time of Chriſts comming in the fleſh, when as indeed all the ſhadowes of the Law did vaniſh, and flye away, but more fitly to the great day of the generall iudgement, when as indeed all the ſhadowes, euen all errors, and all calamities ſhall vtterly vaniſh for euer, and the Church ſhall liue in glorious light, world without end. Now that he ſayth, hee will vntill that day goe to the mountaine of Myrrhe, and to the mountaine of Incenſe, it may be taken two wayes. Firſt

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the heauens are the holy mountaine of the Lord, and there the prayſe and honour which the bleſſed Angels and Spirites of the iuſt, doe glorifie him withall, is as ſweet incenſe and precious myrrhe. So that the heauens may very well bee called the mountaine of myrrhe, and the mountaine of incenſe. If wee take it ſo, then it reſpecteth his aſcending into the heauens (as he tolde his Diſciples) to prepare a place, where he muſt (as S. *Peter* ſheweth) remaine vntill the time of the reſtoring of all things. And then will hee come downe to fetch all his choſen, that where he is, there alſo may they be. Then the ſecond way is, that the mountaine of myrrhe, &c may bee taken for the church militant vpon earth, which is often called the mountaine of the Lord. And very well it may be called the mountaine of myrrhe, and the mountaine of incenſe, becauſe there bee the ſweete prayers and prayſes of God offered vp, through the mediation of Ieſus Chriſt. And of this mountaine hee ſayeth, *Behold I am with you vnto the end of the world*, Mat. 28 For albeit our Lord is in the Heauens, yet is hee preſent with his Church vpon

earth, highly esteeming the faithfull, and sincere worship and seruice of his people: For this cause hee appeared in vision to Saint *Iohn*, Reu. 1. in the middest of the seuen golden Candlestickes, holding the seuen starres in his right hand. The church of *Rome*, as if hee were abent hath set vp one to be his Vicar, to execute his office, euen to giue remission of sinnes, and life euerlasting vnto all men.

This is Antichrist that taketh vppon him to be in Christs stead. But the godly doe by faith find, and feele the presence of the Lord, they dwell in him, and hee in them, they need not, hauing the fountaine it selfe of liuing waters, seeke to these stinking puddles.

It followeth, *Thou art all fayre my loue, and there is no spot in thee* Here is a very great prayse giuen to the Bride, that her beauty is absolute and perfect throughout all parts of her, and that there is no spot or blemish at all. From hence as it seemeth Saint *Paul* draweth his speech, when hee sayeth that *Christ gaue himselfe for his Church, that he might sanctifie it, and clense it by the washing of water through the word. That hee might make it vnto himselfe a glori-*

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ous Church, not haning ſpot or wrinckle, or any ſuch thing, but that it ſhould be holy and without blame. Epheſ. 5. ver. 25. 26. 27. How ſhall the Church make any doubt but that ſhee is loued of God, when ſhee is become thus glorious and pure, as not to haue in any part ſo much as the leaſt ſpot or wrinckle of deformity? For that one word (*mum*) which the Bridegroome here vſeth in the Hebrew text, which is vſually expounded a *ſpot*. Saint *Paul* expreſſeth by all theſe, ſpot, wrinckle, or any ſuch things.

Then we ſee that although the Bridegroome did not goe through all particular parts of his Spouſe, to giue them their ſeuerall commendation, as he did in diuers yet he aſcribeth a full perfection of beauty vnto them all, when he ſayeth, *Thou art all fayre my loue, and there is no ſpot in thee.* Such a glorious miſticall body is meet to be ioyned with ſo glorious a head: and if there were any deformity remaining, how could it be vnited vnto him? But here it will be ſayd, how agreeth this with her own ſpeech in the firſt Chap. where ſhee ſayeth, *I am blacke, but yet comely, and that ſhee is ſunne burnt?* How doth it a-

gree with all thoſe places of holy Scripture, which teſtifie ſo plainely, that all the faithfull while they liue heere bee full of ſpots and deformities. I haue anſwered this before, namely, that men muſt not conſider or eſteeme the Church, as ſhee is in her ſelfe, or as ſhe is here in the world: but we muſt behold her in Chriſt iuſtified and fully ſanctified in him, and as ſhee ſhall be at the day of marriage, when her whole trimming and decking ſhall be put on. And therefore thoſe Heretiques and Schiſmatikes, which from thoſe places haue drawne their ſtrong imagination, touching the full purity of the Church, while ſhe is vpon earth, and ſo haue condemned the true Church for her imperfections and ſinnes are much deceyued. It may be ſayde then, why dooth not the Lord then rather ſay to his Spouſe, thou ſhalt be all fayre my loue, and there ſhall be no ſpot in thee. I anſwer, that the ſcripture for the certainety of things to come, ſpeaketh of them as if they were preſent: becauſe God is vnchangeable in all his decrees, and none can hinder his worke.

Now remayneth the laſt verſe of that which

which I did reade: *Come with mee from Lebanon, my Spouſe, come with mee from Lebanon, &c.* This may be expounded two wayes, eyther that the Lord doth promiſe to ſhew to his Spouſe the land of promiſe, or that he promiſeth to draw her to himſelfe out of all places of the world. If wee take it in the former ſenſe, that wee are to remember, that the land of Canaan promiſed to *Abraham* and his ſeed was a figure of the heauenly inheritance: then when the ſight of this is promiſed, or the viewing of it from the toppe of thoſe hils, we are to be lifted vp to the conſideration of an higher matter, namely, to the beholding of that glorious inheritãce which ſhall laſt for euer. For by faith the godly doe behold the Land of promiſe, euen the land of the liuing, which the Lorde in great kindneſſe did ſhew vnto them. If we take it in the other ſenſe (which I ſuppoſe is the right) then the promiſe is this, that howſoeuer his Spouſe is ſcattered and diſperſed among the Nations of the world, hee will take her vnto him. You know it is ſet downe that the Lord will gather his Elect from the foure Windes, and from the very vttermoſt

parts of the earth. And it is to be marked that hee ſayeth, from the dens of the Lions and from the mountains of the Leopards. For the church dweleth here in the world among cruell and ſauage beaſtes, which would vtterly deuoure her: but the Lord, doth miraculouſly keepe her, and ſayeth ſhee ſhall come with him from among them.

The Lord draweth vs out of great tribulation, as the Elder telleth *Iohn*, Reuel. 7. verſe 14. And as Saint *Paul* ſayeth, *Through many troubles wee muſt enter into the Kingdome heauen.* Let vs not then faint:

THE

The eight Sermon.

CHAP. IIII.

9 *My ſiſter, my ſpouſe, thou haſt wounded my heart, thou haſt wounded my heart, with one of thy eyes, and with a chaine of thy necke.*

10 *My ſiſter, my ſpouſe, how fayre is thy loue, how much better is thy loue then wine? and the ſauour of thine ointment then all ſpices?*

11 *Thy lips, my ſpouſe drop as honey combs honey and milke are vnder thy tongue, and the ſauour of thy garments, is as the ſauour of Lebanon.*

12 *My ſiſter, my ſpouſe, is as a garden incloſed, as a ſpring ſhut vp, and a fountaine ſealed vp.*

13 *Thy plants are as an orchard of Pomegranates with ſweet fruits, as Camphire, Spikenard.*

14 *Euen Spikenard and Saffron, Calamus and Cinamon, with all the trees of Incenſe, myrrhe and aloes, with all the chiefe ſpices.*

15 *O fountaine of the gardens, O well of liuing waters, and the ſprings of Lebanon.*

16 *Ariſe O North and come O South, & blow on my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out: Let my Welbeloued come to his garden, and eate his pleaſant fruit.*

17 *I am come to my garden, my Siſter, my Spouſe: I gathered my myrrhe with my ſpice I eate my hony combe with my hony, I dranke my wine with my milke: Eate O friends, drink and make you merry, O welbeloued.*

THe holy bridegroom proceedeth in commending of his bride with rare and ſingular commendations, as wee ſhall beſt ſee in the particulars.

And firſt hee commendeth her beauty and decking to bee ſuch, that it hath (as our Engliſh Tranſlation ſayeth) wounded his heart, Which hee alſo repeateth for vehemency. If we follow this

this Tranſlation, then wee muſt vnderſtand that his heart is wounded with loue: which is a very vehement ſpeech and dooth indeede fitly expreſſe the ſenſe of this place, for it is his purpoſe to expreſſe an exceeding loue.

But the ſame ſenſe remayning we may ſay, thou haſt pluckt away mine heart, my ſiſter and my ſpouſe, thou haſt pluckt away mine heart with one of thine eyes, &c. For it doth wonderfully ſet foorth the paſſion of loue, when a Bridegroome ſhall tell his Bride, that ſhee hath his heart, or that ſhee hath gotten his heart. Hereby appeareth the ſuperaboundant loue of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt towardes his Church: if that there bee not any words ſufficient fully to expreſſe the ſame. And heere wee may ſee againe what a glory there is in the ſimple and chaſt, and beautifull eye of faith: as alſo in thoſe graces and ſpirituall ornaments: which are the fruites thereof, which are meant by a chaine of her necke. O that wee could throughly conſider of this, that with a burning zeale our harts might alwayes bee enflamed for to ſeeke encreaſe of the cleare ſight of this pure eye.

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I might ſtand to rehearſe many places of the holy Scriptures, which do commend faith: but none beyond this, that Chriſt ſayeth, that his ſpouſe hath pluckt away his heart, or that ſhee hath gotte his heart with one of her eyes. O how dooth thef Lord delight in faith? If faith bee one o her eyes (may ſome ſay) which is the other? I anſwere, that becauſe the Church is brought in vnder the perſon of a womā there be two eyes aſcribed vnto her, but withall wee muſt know, that faith is the one and the other. The holy Ghoſt ſayeth: *That the Goſpell is the power of God to ſaluation, vnto euery one that beleeueth, to the Iew firſt, and then to the Grecian, adding this reaſon, that the righteouſneſſe of God is reuealed in it from faith to faith,* Rom. 1. 17 18. ſpeaking as if there were a double faith, when as indeed there is but one faith but the ſame weaker and ſtronger- And ſo in regard of the ſame encreaſe of the liuely faith, it may be called two eyes, as that place ſayth, from faith to faith. In the next place hee ſheweth how delightſome and pleaſant her loue is vnto him: he doth expreſſe it by the way of admiration, and wonderment ſaying, *How fayre*

is thy loue, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe? How much better is thy loue then wine? It is out of all doubt, that all good things come vnto vs, and vpon vs from the loue of Chriſt, but contrariwiſe our loue towards him can adde nothing vnto his fulneſſe, and therefore poore ſoules, euen ſimple creatures heere vpon the earth that doe loue him, haue theſe temptations euery one of them at one time or other: I loue Chriſt Ieſus from the very bottome of my heart but what regard can he haue of the loue of ſuch a poore ſilly wretch as I am? What can my loue be in his eyes? I feele indeed that I loue him with a loue vnfained. Behold here beloued, vnto your comfort, what hee pronounceth of the loue wherewith euery faithfull ſoule doth loue him, how fayr is thy loue my ſiſter, my ſpouſe? How much better is thy loue then wine? In hath beene noted in the firſt Chapter, that wine is put for all dainty things in a banquet, whereby it is manifeſt, that the loue wherewith we loue the Lord Ieſus, is maruellous accepted vnto him.

Let vs come to this, to be ſure that we loue him (not after our own fantaſies) but with the true ſpiritual loue, and then what ſoeuer

ſoeuer temptation ariſeth to diſcourage vs, let vs bee out of doubt that our loue is precious, delightſome and acceptable vnto him. O will ſome ſay, how ſhall I know that I loue the Lord Ieſus Chriſt with this ſincere loue, which he ſayth here is ſo beautifull in his eyes, and ſo much better then wine? I would faine loue him. I anſwer, thou knoweſt what is written: *If yee loue mee, keepe my commandements*: yea there ariſeth all the doubt, for who is it that doth not dayly tranſgreſſe the holy commaundements of God? Wee muſt therefore looke to this, how can wee ſay with S. *Paul*, Rom. 7. *I delight in the law of God touching the inner man.* If we loue the truth, if we loue holineſſe, righteouſneſſe and purity: And if our ſoule do loath and abhorre that which is vnpure & vnclean, though it ſticke ſo faſt in vs, that wee cannot wholly caſt it off: Let vs be out of all doubt that we loue the Lord. O happy and bleſſed then are we, our loue cannot be lightly eſteemed in his eyes. Indeed ſuch as do perſwade themſelus that they doe loue the Lord, and doe not in the zeale of purity loath & deteſt iniquity from the bottome of their hearts, but

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can take pleasure therein, are vtterly deceyued.

You know that Saint *Iohn* casteth such downe as lyers, that say: *They loue God, and keepe not his commandements. The sauour of her oyntment*, which hee sayeth, *is better then the sauour of all sweet spices*, is to bee vnderstood of those heauenly gifts & graces of the holy Ghost which are bestowed vpon the faithfull, and for which they be called Christians. There bee indeed very many which professe in word that they be Christians: but they know not what it is to bee a true Christian. For where is the sweete sauour of their oyntments? What graces of the holy Ghost doe appeare them? Nay, in stead of these they doe in all places where they doe become, cast forth a loathsome stinke of their filthy words and wicked deedes. O beloued, let no man seduce and deceyue you. You haue many now a dayes which are come to this depth of impiety, that whosoeuer will not ioyne with them, to stinke in filthinesse, they by and by, in reproach terme them Puritans. This blasphemy the Lord God will powre foorth his vengeance vpon one day, although his

his long ſuffering be ſuch, that he ſeemeth not to regarde it, But as it is written, *He that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill:* Let them paſſe that we may returne againe to the commendation of the Bride.

Thy lips (ſayth he) *my ſpouſe droppe as honey combes, honey and milke are vnder thy tongue, and the ſauour of thy garments, is as the ſauour of Lebanon.* Here are in this verſe two things highly prayſed, her ſpeech and her ſweet ſauour. The former of theſe euen her ſpeech, is compared to the dropping of the honey combes: as the ſweete drops of honey that diſtil from the honey combes, ſo be the words that come from her mouth: for he ſayth, *thy lippes droppe as the honey combes.* And further, her ſpeech is not onely moſt ſweet, but wholeſome & nouriſhing, which is expreſſed in theſe words, *Honey and milke are vnder thy tong:* Honey and milke are for nouriſhment. Theſe are excellent commendations, in which wee may note, what an alteration is wrought in the regenerate, and how farre they are changed from that which they were in themſelues by nature. Our Sauior ſayth in the Goſpel (as you know) *that out of the abonndance of the heart, the*

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mouth ſpeaketh. A good man out of the good treaſure of his heart bringeth forth good things, aud an euill man out of the euill treaſure of his heart bringeth forth euill things: the tongue vttereth but that which is within. And what that is in the vnregenerat and naturall man, heare what Saint *Paul* alledgeth: *Their throat is an open Sepulchre, with their tongues they haue deceiued. the poyſon of Aſpes is vnder their lips, whoſe mouth is full of curſing, and bitterneſſe?* Rom. 3. 13. 14. Is not here a greate difference? For curſing and bitterneſſe, whereof the mouth was full, the lips now droppe as the honey combes. In ſtead of the poyſon of Aſpes, vnder their lippes, honey and milke are vnder their tongue: Is not here I ſay, a wonderfull alteration? For are not they which are regenerat and ſanctified in Chriſt Ieſus, much altered from that they were of themſelues? when as for curſing and bitterneſſe, and for the poyſon of Aſpes, their lippes doe droppe as the honey combes, and honey & milke are vnder their tong? Let vs conſider of it yet more particularly. A naturall man hath nothing in him, but meere rebellion againſt God: his heart is euill, ſtuffed full

of

of bitter enmity and hatred, both of God and man. His words doe dishonour and blaspheme God, and they hurt and destroy men: On the other side, a man led and guided by the good spirite of the Lord, hath in him the loue of God, and the loue of men. Pure words do flow from him, he confesseth the truth, the Law of grace is vnder his tongue, hee vttereth the prayse and glory of God, he doth instruct and edifie men; euery way his words are sweet, yea they be most wholesome and nourishing, they be (as it is here sayde) honey and milke. Where shall we finde these lippes which droppe as the honey combes? Where be those tongues vnder which there is honey and milke. What need that question will some say. They be the lips and tongue of the Church, the lips and tongue of Christians. Goe among them, and see if their lips doe not drop as the honey combes. If wee should againe demaund, whether shall wee goe to seeke out those christians, whose speech is so sweete and so wholesome? Some man will say, they be euery where, I hope wee be all Christians, God forbid else say they? Then shall wee finde that euery

where

where mens lips doe droppe as the honey combes, and that honey and milke are vnder their tongue. What are then these sweete and wholesome words, euery where to be heard? Are they not the smooth flattering and dissembling speeches which many do vse? are they not the lyes and slaunders of the multitude? Or be they not the bitter reproaches, curses, taunts, and reuilings, which ouerflow in all places: or the vaine, babling, gibing, and iesting, mixed with baudy wordes: These be the things which the lips of thousand thousands doe droppe, & a man shall finde almost nothing else in all places, euen among those which professe themselues to be Christians, and to be of the true Church. O Lord if this be the true Church, which Christ doth heere describe (as it cannot be denyed) where shall we finde her? Surely they bee but euen a few among the multitude, euen scatered here and there, whose lips droppe as the honey combes, vnder whose tongue is honey and milke. *Whose speech* as S. Paul willeth it should be, *is alwayes gracious, powdered with salte, to knowe howe to answer euery man*, Col. 4. 6. *Euen such as*

may minister grace to the Hearers, Ephes 4, 29. O let vs not then deceiue our selus brethren: If our talke bee vaine and filthy, are we the true childrē of the church? Shall it then be sayde of vs, thy lips dropp as the honey combes, honey and milke are vnder thy tongue, seeke to haue clean hearts that your words may be sweete? In the next words hee cōmendeth her good sauour: *The sauour of thy garments is as the sauour of Lebanon.* Lebanon was a place in which there did grow such sweete things, as cast forth a delightsome sauour. The Bride is perfumed with such graces, that all her garments doe smell sweete: This is not meant of the bodily cloathing: for many of the Saints haue liued in pouerty, clothed in simple appaarell, yea euen in stinking prisons and dungeons: But it is to bee vnderstood of the spirituall cloathing, where the filthy ragges of the old man are put off, and the new man is put on. *Which is renued in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.* Col. 3, ver. 9. 10. This is the cloathing of which it is sayde, *Thou hast a few names in Sardi, which haue not defiled their garments: and they shall walke with me in white, for they are worthy,*

worthy, Reuel. 3.4. Hee was cast foorth from the marriage that wanted the wedding garment, Math. 22. For let a man neuer so impudently thrust in himselfe in his stinking clothes, to be as one of the Church, yet he shall bee thrust out: for the garments of the bride are sweet, euen as the sauour of Lebanon. Al at this wedding haue their garments very sweet. Thus haue wee seen very great commendations of the Church: but yet here are further: for it followeth: *My sister, my spouse, is as a garden enclosed, as a spring shut vp, and a fountaine sealed vp.* Here bee two similitudes that doe set forth her prayse: The one is of a garden that is enclosed: the other, of a spring or fountaine shut vp and sealed.

This inclosure, this shutting vp, and sealing, is first to commend the chastitie of the Church, that with a firme faithfulnesse keepeth her selfe onely to Christ. There is no entrance for any beside him. She loueth, she obeyeth, and worshippeth him, and vnto him she reserueth all her fruites. She doth not worship straunge Gods, she runneth not a whoring after Idols, shee is inclosed and sealed vppe

onely vnto her welbeloued. Here is (I ſay) the chaſtity of the Bride. Then ſecondly it ſheweth, that none other are partakers with her in thoſe heauenly treaſures, which ſhe receiueth through Chriſt. There be many in the viſible Church, which ſeeme to be partakers, and make a great ſhew: but the trueth is, none are bleſſed, but onely the Elect.

Then further, wee muſt obſerue, that heere are ioyned together a garden full of ſweet plants, and a ſpring and fountaine of liuing waters. If the bed & plants in a garden be not watered, there can nothing grow, but all will wither and bee fruitleſſe. This garden therefore is well watered, there is in it a ſpring of liuing waters which alwayes doe flowe: wherewith euery plant and precious hearbe is watered. Theſe waters, albeit they abound, yet doe they not flow foorth of the garden, they bee ſhutte vp and ſealed, none other plants are watered by them. What be theſe waters? Euen the holy and pure word of the Lord: the wholſome doctrine of the Scriptures. With this are all the ſweet plants of the Lords garden watered, according to the ſaying of S. *Paul*,

Paul, I haue planted, Apollos hath watered. 1. Cor. 3. ver. 6. Wherwith did *Paul* plant or wherewith did *Apollos* water, but with the liuely word of the Lord? or wherwith ſhall any plant grow vp to bring foorth fruit vnto the Lord, but with the ſame word? you haue many indeed that regarde not this, which yet take themſelues to be good plants but they be vtterly deceyued, they bee but baſtard ſtockes that bring forth ſowre and bitter fruites. For if they will grow and bring foorth good fruit indeed, they muſt be continualy watered with this fountaine: they muſt receyue in the wholeſome word of God into their hearts and ſoules.

Now ſome man may here obiect, that the doctrine of Gods word doth flow forth vnto all, it is not as a fountaine ſealed vp. Doe not many reade it, heare it preached, and profeſſe it, which yet are not ſaued? I anſwer, that indeed after a ſort the word of the Lord doth flow forth ouer multitudes, which are not the true plãts of the Lord, but ſhal be plucked vp: but it doth not water them, they haue not the effectual working of it to make them grow & bear good fruit: they haue (at the

caſt ſome of them) a taſte thereof: but as water that falleth vpon a rocke, doth onely wette the outſide, and not ſoften the rocke or the ſtone within: ſo their hearts remaine ſtill hard as flint, and it doth not water them.

This is it then, the word of God is common vnto many: but touching the liuely efficacy thereof, to regenerate, to plant, to water, and to make fruitfull, it is peculiar to the holy Church. She onely is that way, the fountaine in which this liuing water remayneth: her plants bee al watered with it, and made fruitfull. If thou doeſt feele that the pure doctrine of God doth change thy heart and ſoften it, ſo that in ſteade of thoſe ſtinking vices, which are in it by nature, thou doſt bring forth vertues, then is not the fountaine ſealed vppe vnto thee: but if thou heare and heare, and reade, and be not reformed the fountaine is ſtill ſealed vnto thee, yea verily, the fountaine is ſtill ſealed vp vnto thee: thou art not by reading or hearing the holy word watred, made to grow and to bring forth fruit.

Thus may wee ſee how the Church is chaſte vnto Chriſt, bringeth forth her fruit

fruit onely to him, and watereth no plants but her owne. And what plantes theſe are, the two next verſes doe ſhew: for here are reckoned vp all manner of the beſt plants. *Thy plants* (ſayeth hee) *are as an orchard of Pomegranates with ſweet fruits as Camphire, and Spikenard. Euen Spikenard and Saffron, Calamus, and Cinnamon, with all the trees of incenſe, Myrrhe and Aloes, with all the chiefe ſpices.* Heere is the goodlieſt garden that euer was heard of in which be all theſe ſweet plants: here be ſweet fruits, here be all the chiefe ſpices, and the ſweet incenſe, here is whatſoeuer is delectable and precious.

I mind not to ſtand vpon theſe in particular, to ſhew the excellency of euery of them, for that is needleſſe: onely take the ſimilitude in generall, as if there were a goodly garden, in which were all the moſt precious plants vnder heauen, that do bring forth the ſweeteſt, the moſt wholeſome, the moſt dainty and comfortable things that are in the world, and to this Chriſt likeneth his Church, euen his garden encloſed. By theſe goodly plants then are meant all the faithfull, they be the Lords plants, they do beare all theſe ſweet

aud delectable fruites before mentioned. What a goodly garden hath the Lord planted to himselfe? These plants haue been planted by the Lord in all ages, by the ministery of his holy Prophets and Apostles, and by the ministery of al faithfull pastors and teachers: as we reade how *Paul* sayeth of himselfe, I haue planted. These plants hath the Lord also watered from time to time, by the hands of the same his seruants, euen with the pure waters of heauenly doctrine: as it is written, *Apollos* watereth. From hence the fruites aboue mentioned haue sprũg as the sound knowledge of God, true light, sincere & liuely faith, stedfast hope, with vnfayned loue to God and men, inuocation of the name of God, praise and thanksgiuing vnto his holy Maiesty, humility, meekenes, gentlenesse, long suffering, with all the workes of mercy, which proceedeth from a sanctified heart, are sweeter before the Lord, then all incense of the best spices: Happy, yea thrice happy are all those men whome the Lord hath vsed, and doth vse as his faithfull instruments to plant and to water such a garden, and to make it bring forth such fruits.

What

What greater, or more worthy worke can there be in the World? Great ſhall their reward be before the Lord God, which are found faithfull Labourers. Let all the Miniſters of the goſpell conſider well of this place, and eſteeme it a far greater bleſſing then if they had all worldly dignities and preferments when their labours are fruitfull in planting and watring the plants of this garden.

And let them not be diſcouraged, that the blind world ſeeth not the glory of this worke, but deſpiſeth and reproacheth it Neither let the terrors which Sathan doth rayſe, daunt, or diſmay them. If a man with all his labours may plant but euen ſome very few of theſe excellent plants, which are ſo deare and precious in the eies of the Lord, or water them, ſo as they become fruitfull in thoſe forenamed fruites, what a glory is it? What ſhould a Miniſter of the goſpell looke after beſides this? On the other ſide, let the deſtroyers and layers waſt of this garden of the Lord, or ſuch as hinder the growth and fruitfulnes of the young plants, behold here what an heauy iudgement of Almighty GOD han-

hangeth ouer their heades. O how grieuous is it in the ſight of the Lord which they doe? Let it be that an earthly Prince had ſuch a garden with plants of Pomegranates, with ſweet fruites as Camphire, Spikenard, Saffron, ſweet Calamus, and Cinamon, with all the trees of incenſe, Myrrhe and Aloes, with all the chiefe ſpices, and men ſhould enter into it, and deſtroy or lay it waſte, would he endure it at their hands? How then will the Lord of Lords abide that ſuch wicked men ſhal deſtroy or hinder his plants, which ſo far paſſe thoſe earthly plants in price, and not bee reuenged? You know what a woe our Sauiour in the Goſpel doth denounce againſt him that ſhall offend one of thoſe little ones that truſt in him ſaying. *It were better for him that a Milſtone were hanged about his necke, and that he were caſt into the bottome of the ſea.* How ſmall regard of the people of God haue ſome had, eſteeming them little better then ſwine? What care they for planting or watring, they know not how precious the plants be? They eſteeme themſelues highly, the garden which they be in, they weigh not how they lay waſt.

Let

Let vs proceede, as it is a moſt worthie worke to be a true planter or a waterer of this garden, which is ſo goodly and precious in the eyes of Chriſt: ſo is it a moſt happy thing to be a right plant. And here let euery man looke well vnto himſelfe: we all profeſſe the name of Chriſt, and ſo to be plants in this garden. Looke to the fruits before named, which the right plants do bring forth. They be not pride vaine-glory, nor ſelfe loue, they bee not curſing and ſwearing, lying and ſlaundering, they be not dicing, drinking, and whoring, they be not enuie, hatred and malice, or a number ſuch like. Theſe bee ſtinking and abominable fruites before the Lord. If thou beare ſuch, what ſhall it auayle thee that thou ſtandeſt for a time as a plant in the Church? For thou ſhalt bee rooted out. True it is that in the viſible Church there be many ſtinking & noyſome weedes, many baſtard plantes, which bring foorth moſt noyſom fruites they doe hurt and hinder what they can, the true plants, but the Lord doth put difference, he will root them all out, and preſerue euery true plant. It dooth then ſtand vs greatly vpon, to looke what fruit we

we bring forth, and to endeauour to be approued as true plants. Away with thoſe filthy rotten and ſtinking workes of the fleſh, and walke in the fruits of the ſpirit. And now in the two next verſes, the Church maketh anſwer vnto her ſpouſe.

In the former verſe (whereas the Lord had prayſed her to bee ſo ſweete a garden, ſo well watered, and of ſuch precious plants) ſhee aſcribeth all the prayſe thereof vnto him, in theſe words, *O fountaine of the gardens, O well of liuing Waters, and the ſprings of Lebanon.*

The vniuerſall Church is but one garden, and all the particular Churches bee gardens, ſo that her ſpeech and his do not differ, when he calleth her a garden, and ſhe calleth him the fountaine of the Gardens, when he calleth her a fountaine ſealed vp, which doth water all the plantes, ſhe doth acknowledge the truth thereof vnto his prayſe, affirming that he is the fountaine of the gardens, that is, look what ſoeuer waters of life bee in her, yea euen in all particular churches, they flow from him, he is the fountaine. What neede I ſtand hereto rehearſe vnto you thoſe places of Scripture, which doe affirme, that

in him is all fulnesse and that of his fulnes we do receiue, that hee is made vnto vs of God, Wisedome, righteousnesse, sanctification and redemption? The Bride doth acknowledge all here in one word, vvhen she calleth him the fountain of the gardens. This is the prayse and the glory, which all the faithfull doe giue vnto Christ Iesus, not chalenging any part of goodnesse to themselues. Then that she calleth him a vvell of liuing waters, and streames that flow out of Lebanon, or as it may be expounded, that they be springs flowing, which doe excell: those that flye from Lebanon, from whence it is manifest, by this place did runne cleare springs of water: and liuing waters are those that alwayes doe flow as the springs, opposed vnto standing waters.

Then the sense is this, that the graces and the waters of life which doe flow from Christ vpon his church, are such as can neuer be dried vp, they flowe from a bottomlesse fountaine, albeit hee bestow his graces and giftes from time to time, in neuer so great measure, yet they bee not diminished. The Romish church hath vtterly swarued from this & see-

ſeeketh vnto other Mediators to obtaine the things which appertaine vnto righteouſneſſe and ſaluation. They will not aſcribe this glory vnto him, that hee is the fountaine of the gardens, and Well of liuing waters, they be not the Bride which here ſpeaketh.

And now let vs come to the orher part of her ſpeech, which is expreſſed in the next verſe, wherein ſhee maketh earneſt prayer. *Ariſe O North winde, and come O South wind, blow vpon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flowe out: let my welbeloued com to his garden, and eate his pleaſant fruit.*

There be two parts of this prayer: In the firſt ſhee craueth the inſpiration, and gracious gifts of the holy Ghoſt, that the ſweete fruites in her may more abounde: In the ſecond part ſhee deſireth the preſence of Chriſt. I will not ſtand curiouſly vpon the nature of theſe two contrary winds, the North wind, and the South winde, but take that which is the principall, namely, that the holy Ghoſt is figured by the winds. For the North winde, and the South wind, which blow vpon the trees, and which are felt of our bodily

ſen-

ſences, are not the windes which blowe vpon the heauenly plants. It is an heauenly breathing which ſhee here requireth, euen the inſpiration of the Spirite of grace, which is the ſpirit of ſanctification, the ſpirit of adoption. Without this fruit there is no quickening, no life, no fruite in the Church, and therefore the faithfull doe rightly call for the North winde, and for the South wind to blow vpon them that is to be enſpired with all graces and gifts of the holy Ghoſt, that ſo the ſweete ſauour of their fruits may flow forth: for according to the treaſure of the ſpirite, which men haue receyued, ſo are their fruites.

When that the Lord did expreſſe the great and ſpecial edification of his church, he ſayde by the Prophet *Ioel, I will poure foorth of my ſpirit vpon all fleſh,* which S. *Paul* alledgeth, Act. 2. And when the Lord denounceth his iudgement, that the courſe of his goſpell ſhould bee ſtayed, which he giueth by the inſpiration of the holy Ghoſt. Saint *Iohn* ſeeth in a viſion foure Angels holding the foure windes, that they ſhould not blow, Reu. 7. Well the matter is this, all the true beleeuers haue

haue receyued the ſpirite of God, they are inſpired by the holy-Ghoſt: but yet their faith, their hope, their charitie, their knowledge are not perfect. The Fleſh is not wholly and fully mortified in them, the vertues which are called the fruites of the ſpirite, which are ſo ſweete and precious before the Lorde, are not growne to their full perfection: and therefore being deſirous to bee more perfect, they crie out to haue the Northwinde and Southwinde to blow vpon their Garden: That is, to haue the inſpiration and heauenly breathing of the holy Ghoſt vpon their hearts, for there is the Garden. And vnto this garden they deſire to come, ſaying: *Let my Welbeloued come to his Garden.*

Our deſire indeede ought to be continually, that wee may haue our hearts ſanctified, and purged by the operation of the holie Ghoſt, that ſo the Lord Ieſus may dwell in them. Doe you imagine that the heart of that man which is full of pride and vaine-glory, of couetouſnes and ſelfeloue, of Fornication and vncleanneſſe, or ſuch like, is a garden for the Lord to dwell in? No, no, the diuell dwelleth in ſuch gardens. Thoſe ſtinking flowers, delight his

his noſe. Looke to it beloued, whether there growe ſweete Flowers, or ſtinking weedes in your hearts: for thereby you ſhall know whether they bee the Gardens of Chriſt, or the gardens of the diuell.

And now let vs come to the laſt verſe of that which I reade vnto you, which is the aunſwere of Chriſt vnto her deſire, that he would come to his garden. The Lorde cannot deny the godly requeſts of his choſen, and therefore he ſayth: *I am come to my Garden my Siſter, my Spouſe, I gathered my Myrrhe with my ſpice, I eate my Honniecombe with my Honny, I dranke my wine with my milke, eate; Oh Friends drinke, and make you merrie, Oh well beloued.* Beholde here how *CHRIST* doeth Feaſt and banquet with his Church: her Faith, her loue, and all the good fruites that ſpring from the ſame, are as Myrrhe and Spices, the Honny combe and honnie, wine and milke.

This is plaine and eaſie to bee vnderſtoode. But how is this, that hee willeth his Friends to eate and be merrie? Doth not the Church bring forth fruits onely to Chriſt? Doubtles the Church doth bring forth her fruits onely to Chriſt her Bridegrome, but yet the Friendes of the Bride-

groome, euen the holy Angels, and the faithfull Miniſters of the Word, haue ioy and reioycing, and glory thereby. The Church cannot by her faith and good works glorifie Chriſt, but the benefite thereof doth redound to the ioy and felicity of the Angels in heauen, and wel may they be ſayde to eate and drinke, and to be merry.

This is cleare, and therefore I will not ſtand to ſhew what *Peter* ſpeaketh of the deſire which the Angels haue to beholde the accompliſhment of all things between Chriſt and his Church, 1. *Pet.* 1. Neyther the triumphant ioy of thoſe heauenly cõpanies at the marriage day, Reu. 19. v. 7. Happy and bleſſed are all they which come to this banquet.

The Lord bring vs vnto it for his mercies ſake, Amen.

THE

The ninth Sermon.

CHAP. V.

1 *I ſleepe, but mine heart waketh, it is the voyce of my welbeloued that knocketh, open vnto me my ſiſter, my loue, my doue, my vndefiled for my head is full of dew, and my lockes with the drops of the night.*

2 *I haue put off my coate, how ſhould I put it on? I haue waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?*

3 *My Welbeloued put in his hand by the hole of the dore, and mine heart was affectioned towards him.*

4 *I roſe vp to open to my welbeloued: and my hands did droppe downe myrrhe, and my fingers pure myrrhe vpon the handles of the barre.*

5 *I opened to my welbeloued: but my welbeloued was gone and paſt: mine heart was*

gone when hee did ſpeake, I ſought him, but I could not finde him, I called him, but hee anſwered me not.

6 *The Watch-men that went about the Cittie, found mee, they ſmote me, and wounded me, the watch-men of the Walles tooke away my Vayle from mee.*

WEe had in the former Chapter almoſte nothing but the prayſes and commendations which Chriſt giueth to his Church: So highlie, and with ſo manie ſpeeches doeth hee magnifie and extoll her beautie and Excellencie. Here in this Chapter wee haue another manner of Song, euen an accuſing and a bewayling Song: For, here ſhee accuſeth herſelfe and bewayleth her great offence, her vnkindnes and vndutifulnes, which ſhe ſhewed towards her moſt kinde and louing Spouſe: reporting alſo the great affection & calamititie that light vpon her by that meanes.

It is a ſtraunge thing that there ſhould be ſuch a ſudden alteration: but this is the

the ſtate of the regenerate, euen now enflamed and rapt with a burning loue and zeale of Chriſt: by and by, all ſeemeth to be ſmothered and almoſt quenched. This is the Battell in them, betweene the Fleſh and the Spirite: this is from the imperfection, that is in all the Saints.

But now let vs come to her wordes: *I ſleepe* (ſayeth ſhee,) *but mine heart waketh*: Beholde the holie Virgin heere falleth a ſleepe (for ſo ſhee ſayeth) but not (as wee may ſay) into a dead ſleepe: for her heart is waking. Shee doth but ſlumber as one that is halfe a ſleepe. We muſt conſider here three things eſpecilly, what this ſleepe is, whence it proceedeth, and what the effects thereof be.

Touching the firſt, it were great folly for any man to take it of the bodily or naturall ſleepe: ſeeing the Church is to be conſidered altogether, according to her ſpirituall and heauenly birth. It muſt needes then be a ſpirituall ſlumber, euen a drowſineſſe in the heart and minde, touching heauenly things. This proceedeth from the remnants of the old man in the godly. *The Fleſh* (ſayth the Apoſtle) *luſteth againſt the ſpirite, and the Spirit is againſt the Fleſh,*

and theſe are contrarie the one to the other, ſo that yee cannot doe the things that ye would: Galath. 5. verſ. 17. When theſe concupiſcences, theſe corrupt and worldly luſtes waxe ſtrong, and doe ſeeme euen much to preuaile, then is there a damping of the ſpirituall graces, euen as it were a ſlumber, that falleth vpon the minde: I neede not ſtand vpon this.

Now what effects doe follow, may eaſily be gathered: Faith hath not the full and liuely operation, Loue ſheweth not her heart: Prayer waxeth feeble. The ioy and delight in all holy exerciſes is decayed, and ſo the practiſing of vertue is but ſlender. But here is not all: For the holy Scripture in ſundry places calleth vpon vs, to take heede that wee fall not into this ſleepe, but that wee watche, ſhewing great danger that may enſue. *Be ſober & watch* (ſayeth the Apoſtle) *For your aduerſary the diuell goeth about like a roaring Lyon, ſeeking whome hee may deuoure.* When wee bee aſleepe, the diuell ſteppeth in to leade vs vnto manie ſinnes. And ſurely the regenerate in their ſleepe and ſecuritie doe commit and beare with much vanitie, and many ſinnes, they go ſmoothly away withall.

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They are not in this ſleepe ſo much grieued as they ought to be when the Name of God is diſhonoured. Yet here is one ſpeciall thing to be noted, that when ſhe was a ſleepe, yet her heart was waking: what of that? Or, what doth that ſhew vnto vs? It ſheweth plainely, that the true and liuely Faith, and the ſpirite of Sanctification are neuer vtterly extinguiſhed. The worke of the Newe byrth can neuer be quite put out: a moſt ſinglar comfort.

The Faithfull doo fall oftentimes into great ſecurity, negligent they are in performing holy dutyes: yea, they doo commit grieuous ſinnes (as *Dauid* in his ſecuritie did commit adultery and murther) but yet the heart waketh, there remayneth ſomewhat within, the ſleepe is not deadly: all Faith, all Loue, all Zeale is not gone, howſoeuer the Luſts of the Fleſh play their parte for a time. This dooth Saint *Iohn* plainly teach, ſaying: *Whoſoeuer is borne of God ſinneth not, for his ſeede remaineth in him, neither can hee ſinne, becauſe hee is borne of God.* 1. Iohn 3. verſ. 9. From hence it is that when the Church ſleepeth, her heart waketh, that the ſeede of God doth remaine in her, And from hence it is, that

ſhe cānot loſe the work of ſanctification, that ſhe is born of *GOD*: who is immortall and vnchangeable. And as it is written, *Euery branch that beareth fruite, he purgeth, that it may beare more fruite*, Iohn 15. *No fruitfull branch ſhall be cut off*. Then let them go which with the papiſts would vp hold and maintaine that wicked opinion, that the true iuſtifying Faith, & Sanctifying ſpirite, may be had and vtterly loſt.

Well, thus hath the Bride in few words ſet forth into what eſtate ſhee was fallen, and now ſhe ſetteth forth in the next place the great kindnes and loue of her ſpouſe, who ſeeketh to awake, and to raiſe her out of this daungerous ſleepe. *Hee knocketh and he calleth, it is* (ſayth ſhee) *the voyce of my wel-beloued that knocketh*. Theſe ſpeeches are vſed in other places of the holie Scripture: for to the Church of the *Laodiceans*, which was neyther hote nor cold, the Lord *IESVS* ſayth, *Behold I ſtand at the dore and knocke, if any man will heare my voyce, & wil opē the dore, I will come in vnto him, and will ſuppe with him, and he with me*. Reuel. 3. verſ. 19, 20. Alſo hee calleth vppon the Church of *Sardie* to awake, to ſtrengthen the things that remaine which

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are ready to dye, *Reuelat:* 3. verſe 2.

This is the ſingular kindnes of our Lord, to knock and call at the dore of our harts, to waken vs, when wee are fallen aſleepe: he will not looſe his beloued, whome hee hath bought ſo deare. This great kindnes of his, doth the Bride here ſet forth in theſe his ſpeeches: *Open vnto mee my Siſter, my Loue, my Doue, my vndefiled: for my head is full of deaw, and my locks with the drops of the night.* Firſt, he that is the rich treaſure of all felicitie, doth offer himſelfe to dwell in the heart: For, hee doth knocke, and ſayeth: *Open to mee*; what greater kindnes can be ſhewed? And moſt happy are they which doe open vnto him.

What is all the whole ſound of the Goſpell, but a knocking and a calling of the Lorde, to haue vs open the dores of our hearts, to let him in? And marke well, how the faithfull, euen in their ſleepe, can tell that it is the voyce of *CHRIST*, when hee doth knocke and call. Hee ſaith *My ſheepe heare my voyce*, Iohn 10.

Manie ſay they canot tell which is the Trueth when they heare it, or which is the voyce and doctrine of Chriſt. For how ſhould they know, or how ſhould they

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bee able to iudge? Doth not euery ſect of falſe teachers boldly and conſtantly affirme, that theirs is the doctrine of God? Such as doe ſpeake thus, doe plainly confeſſe that they bee vtterly voyde of Gods ſpirite, and of all grace, and that indeede they be not of his ſheepe, which heare and knowe his voyce: they bee not of his Church, which euen in her ſleepe doeth know his voyce. If the Faithfull (as it is heere manifeſt) doe heare and knowe the voice of Chriſt when they be aſleepe, how much more when they be awake?

Then in the next place, marke what kinde words he giueth to his Church, and what honour he doth vouchſafe her: For he calleth her *his Siſter, his Loue, his Doue, his vndefiled.* The Lord doeth not flatter nor faine, for hee is Trueth it ſelfe, he hath freely layde all this dignitie and honour vpon her, and made her thus precious, and deare vnto himſelfe.

In the next clauſe of his ſpeech which ſhe reporteth, hee doth perſwade her to open vnto him for this cauſe, that hee hath vnder-gone ſo much for her ſake, his head is wet with deaw, and his lockes with the droppes of the night. The ſimilitude is drawne

drawne from hence, as if a Louer ſhould goe farre in the night, and indure much inconuenience to viſite his Spouſe for her good. True it is, that the paines and ſorrowes which Chriſt hath vnder-gone for his Spouſe, cannot be expreſſed.

And now marke to what end ſhe reporteth heere his kinde and louing ſpeeches, and the things which hee did vndergoe and indure for her ſake. Surely, ſhe doth by this deepely accuſe her ſelfe, and aggrauate her offence, euen bewayling it: For the greater his loue and kindnes is, which he doth vtter by his words, and the greater inconueniences he doth vndergoe for her ſake, the more haynous is her offence, the more grieuous is her her breach of dutie, which ſhe openeth in the words that follow, when ſhe would not open vnto him. As if ſhe ſhould ſay: Ah wretch that I am, how great is my ſinne, that he being ſo exceeding kinde and louing vnto mee, and enduring ſo harde thinges for my ſake, I ſhewed my ſelfe ſo vnkinde, and ſo vndutifull vnto him? For beloued, we muſt needes in all reaſon confeſſe this, that the greater the loue and kindneſſe of Chriſt is towards his Church, and the harder things

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hee hath gone through for her ſake, the more haynous is her offence in ſetting ſo light thereby, and in ſhewing herſelfe vnkinde and vndutifull towards him.

And now marke how ſhe ſhewed herſelfe vnkinde and vndutifull: for ſhe layeth open all the matter, and confeſſeth euen againſt her ſelfe how it was. She was in the warme bed of ſecuritie and carnall eaſe, ſhee is very loath for his ſake to ariſe out of it, and therefore ſhee maketh theſe excuſes, *I haue put off my coate, how ſhall I put it on? I haue waſhed my feete, how ſhall I defile them?*

Wee may eaſily vnderſtand theſe excuſes according to a litterall ſenſe: and vnder theſe two are meante all the excuſes which the Fleſh dooth miniſter vnto the Faithfull, when they bee fallen into the ſpirituall ſleepe, and are layd downe in the bed of ſecurity, to holde them from riſing out of it at the calling of Chriſt. Oh they bee a number of excuſes which the Fleſh doth miniſter in ſuch caſes.

Is it reaſon that I ſhould ſo be diſeaſed? ſhall I forgoe ſuch and ſuch pleaſures and commodities? yea, ſhall I caſt my ſelfe into ſo great inconuenience and daunger?

I thinke

thinke the Church was neuer in greatter ſlumber and ſecuritie then it is now here in this land: peace & wealth hath wrought it. And let euery man enter into his own conſcience, and ſee what excuſes the Fleſh doeth miniſter to keepe him backe, at the daily knocking and calling of Chriſt to open the heart vnto him, that there may be a ſound profeſſion of the Goſpell. Is there not a feare of this or that inconuenience, or harme that will follow? Are we not loathe to take any paines, or to forgoe any vaine delights and pleaſures: and is there not great colour of reaſon in all our excuſes? And I pray you marke well, ſhe doth here make excuſes why ſhee could not ariſe to let him in, but yet ſhe did not forſake him, He is ſtill her wel-beloued: For ſo ſhe ſaid, *it is the voyce of my wel-beloued.* How then? why ſhe knoweth him, ſhe heareth him, ſhee loueth him: but it is in ſuch a drowſie manner, as that ſhee will hold the world and him together. She wil not caſt her ſelfe into peril nor forſake the vaine delights of the Fleſh for his ſake.

Beholde how ſtrong the remnants of ſinne be which remaine euen in the Faithfull and deare children of God. Whither ſhould

ſhould they fall, if the Lorde ſhould let them alone? Doe they not euen refuſe to open the doore of their heart vnto Chriſt? Is not this a maruellous vnkindneſſe, and doth it not deſerue ſharpe puniſhment? Surely we muſt needs looke for it: if not in generall ſcourges, yet in particular corrections and chaſtiſements, vppon thoſe which doe appertaine vnto the Lord, and whom he will raiſe out of their ſleepe.

Now let vs proceede vnto that which doth follow: *My welbeloued put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and mine heart was affectioned towardes him.* The Church dealing to vnkindely, her ſpouſe will now withdraw himſelfe after a ſorte from her, but yet hee will firſt leaue that behinde, that ſhall both raiſe her vp, to ſeeke after him, and ſupport her in her afflictions.

This is his mercie, hee will not ſuffer her to continue in that ſleepe, which ſhee was fallen into: he will make her to ſee her offence, and repent for it: yea, ſhe ſhall ſeeke him ſorrowing, and ſuffer great affliction, hee withdrawing himſelfe after a ſort, that ſhe may take better heede to herſelfe hereafter, and bee more carefull of her owne good. That ſhe ſaieth, *Hee put in his hand*

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at the hole, and our Tranſlation addeth, *of the doore*, it doth rightly indeede expreſſe the ſenſe. The Similitude is taken from hence, when a dore is locked, yet there is a Key-hole, and ſo here: when the hearts of the faithfull be after a ſorte locked vp, & Chriſt ſtandeth at the dore of the heart, and calleth and knocketh, yet they do not open vnto him, but make excuſes, he doeth find ſome little creuice or hole, as through the dore, to put in his hand.

This *Hand* is the ſpirit of *CHRIST*; for hee doth by his ſpirite touch the very inward partes of her heart. And what followeth of that inward touch of his ſpirit? She telleth yee, when ſhe ſayeth, *my heart was affectioned towards him*. The wordes are thus, my bowels were moued towards him. Whereby is meant, that all the inward affections and powers of her minde, are moued with repentance. Now ſhe is grieued, and diſpleaſed with her ſelfe, now ſhe lamenteth her owne follie, that ſhe was ſo vndutifull: now her heart is againe rapt with the loue of him, now ſhee will entertaine him.

Beholde here the power of Gods Spirit, what an alteration he maketh in men, how farre

farre hee changeth them from that which they were before? Downe goeth the power of the Flesh where he commeth. An example of it you may see in the Apostles of Christ: How weake were they and fearfull, at the time of Christes suffering? *Peter* himselfe denyeth his Maister at the voyce of a maide: but after the holy Ghost came downe vpon them, in the day of *Penthecost*, of a companie of weake and trembling Lambs, they became so manie mighty Lyons, they feared not the whole world. So is it with all the true children of the Church, they bee heauie and lumpish, and dull, when the flesh hath a stroke, and beareth some sway. Euery small thing is a let, & ministreth some excuse to keepe them backe: and the excuses seeme to be reasonable. But when the touch of the holy Spirite commeth, that Christ put in his hand at the hole of the dore, then there is a quicknes, a life and a mouing: then nothing can let, but they will seek Christ. It is then (beloued) a thing most necessarie, that we continually begge of the Lord to giue vs his spirit: for we cãnot conceiue what a wonderfull chaunge and alteration he will worke in vs. Hee putteth downe

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the flesh, and raigneth with power. Wee remaine dull, slowe, fearefull, weake and negligent, because wee rest in our owne power very much, and do not instantly and continually craue the gifts of the spirit. But will some man say, dooth not Christ dwel always in the harts of the regenerate? And haue they not always the spirit of sanctification. How thē is it said, that Christ knocketh and calleth to haue them open vnto him, and to let him in, & they make excuses, and refuse. Or how is it that he now toucheth them with his spirite which they had before? This is easie to be answered: for we must note, that there be degrees of the measure of graces and gifts of the holy Ghost. The Apostles had the holy Ghost, and did beleiue before Christs Ascention: but not in that measure afterward. So also the Lord Iesus dwelleth in all the faithfull, euen in those which haue but the least spark of the true and liuely faith: but he knocketh to haue them open the dores of their hearts wider, and to receyue him after a more full manner.

Lift vp your heads ye gates (saith the Prophet) *and be ye lift vp yee euerlasting doores,*

and the King of glrry ſhall come in, Pſal. 24. We muſt ſet the dores of our hearts wide open vnto Chriſt, that he may dwell and raigne in vs.

Let vs returne againe to the Spouſe: behold what a working this hath in her, that Chriſt put in his hand. See what a mouing followeth vpon her repentance: for ſhe ſtayeth not in the bare motions of the mind (as many haue ſome touch, and ſome motions, but they vaniſh) but ſhee ariſeth to open the doore vnto her welbeloued: It is not now grieuous vnto her to put on her coate. O quickning Spirite of grace, O happy touch with the finger of Chriſt, what ſhould become of vs, what dueties to our Lord God ſhould we performe without him? And now marke what followeth: *My hands* (ſayth ſhe) *did droppe downe Myrrh, and my fingers pure Myrrhe vpon the handles of the barre*: In theſe wordes ſhee imagineth the graces of her welboued, Shee could touch nothing with her hands, nor lay her fingers vpon nothing where hee had put in his hand, but all did drop with myrrhe, euen with pure myrrhe. For this is her meaning, that her Welbeloued did

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but put in his hand, and yet he had lefte euen by his touch ſuch aboundance of ſweet graces, that whereſoeuer ſhee toucheth, her hands droppe with the ſame: What a wonderfull ſweet Sauiour is this? And how happy are they whoſe hearts he doth thus touch?

When this heauenly pure Myrrhe in ſuch plenty is put into the heart, all the affections are moued. The ſoule cannot but bewayle her folly and vnkindneſſe, ſhewed to ſo ſweet a Sauiour. There cannot but follow a loue, a zeale, and a care to performe all duties. The Lord extend this mercy towards vs, euen to put in his hand at the doore of our hard and dull hearts, to leaue there this pure myrrhe, that the hands and fingers of our ſoules may droppe therewith, that ſo wee may bee moued with greater and more earneſt affection to ſeeke the Lord, then hitherto wee haue. If hee let vs alone, whether will our fleſh carrie vs? how deepe & dangerous will our ſleepe be that we are fallen into? The fruits of the fleſh which ſo grieuouſly breake forth, euen in the forwardeſt profeſſors of the Goſpell, doe manifeſtly bewray that wee are fallen a-

ſleepe. The Lord hath called, & doth continue calling, & knocking at the dores of our harts, but we are full of excuſes. Some are giuen to worldly delights and pleaſures. Others are ſet ſo vpon gathering & heaping vp riches, that they cannot open vnto Chriſt.

It followeth in the Text, *I opened vnto my welbeloued: but my welbeloued was gone and paſte.* This is ſtrange, that hee calleth and knocketh when ſhee was a ſleepe, and lay in her bed, and now when ſhee is riſen out of her bed, and doth open the doore to let him in, hee withdraweth himſelfe and will not bee ſeene. Her vnkind dealing did deſerue this. But doth this proceede from loue in him that hee doth withdraw himſelfe. Hee hath iuſt cauſe to be diſpleaſed, and ſo to withdraw himſelfe: but yet he doth it euen of purpoſe for her good, and that of a ſingular loue. But ſeeing Chriſt doth dwell alwayes in the faithfull, how cannot it be ſayde, that he doth withdraw himſelfe out of their ſight, eſpecially when hee hath made their hands to droppe with myrrh. This is out of doubt, that the Lord is ſometimes preſent in the ſoules of the faith-

faithfull, and yet to their thinking he ſeemeth to be abſent. He doth ſupport them and yet they haue not that liuely and cõfortable feeling of his preſence, which they wiſh, and which ſomtimes they had. Then the heart is troubled, then they mourne, then they ſeeke and cal after him: for ſhee ſayeth: *Mine heart was gone when he did ſpeake, I ſought him, but I could not finde him, I called him, but he anſwered me not.*

Alas now ſhe is afraid, that her vnkind dealiug ſhould cauſe him to forſake her: Now ſhe openeth the doores of her heart to let him in, ſhe ſeeketh him, and calleth after him, but he will not be found. Who is able to expreſſe the griefe and ſorrowe that the godly ſoule hath, when there is a deepe remorſe for ſinne, and ſhee ſeeketh to feele the conſolation of Chriſt, and he hideth himſelfe from her. True it is, that the ſoule could not repent, ſhee could not open the doore to receiue him in: ſhee could not ſo earneſtly ſeeke and call after him, vnleſſe that he were preſent, and did worke theſe things in her: For all theſe things proceede from his grace: but yet hee doth ſeeme to bee abſent.

Let not this ſeem ſtraunge, when as the glorious Godhead, ynited to the manhood in *CHRIST*, was not ſeparated from the ſame, when hee did hang vpon the croſſe, but did as it were retayne, or not ſhewe forth the power, that the ſame *Manhood* might ſuffer the puniſhmēt that is due to ſinne, and ſo make ſatisfaction, and yet he cryed out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken mee?* Shall not we then take it in ſome ſort that he forſaketh vs, euē when he yet is preſent? But yet here againe will be demaunded, how that which is ſpoken in this place, agreeth with the promiſe which is made, *Seeke and finde, &c.* ſeeing here is no mention for all vehement calling after him, that ſhe doth finde him: yea, ſtill ſhe goeth on, and it is not ſaide that ſhe found him. I anſwer, that here is indeed a moſt vehement ſeeking, & nothing ſaid that ſhe found him, but yet in the beginning of the next chapter, ſhee ſayeth, *Hee was gone downe into his Garden.* Then ſhee perceyueth at the laſt that hee is preſent with her, and there indeede ſhee gloryeth of him. How commeth this to paſſe? Surely, he entreth in when the dore is opened, though ſhe do not perceiue it.

This

This is the Doctrine which I gather, which I would make plaine vnto you: that when the Faithfull Soule is moued with earneſt repentance, and doth ſeeke and cryè after the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, and ſeemeth not to finde him, yet ſhee doeth finde him.

Chriſt dooth not enter in ſo fully and at once, that ſhee dooth perceyue it, and yet in the end, ſhe findeth that he is come to his garden. She findeth that her riſing out of her ſleepe, and from her Bed, her opening the doore, ſeeking and calling after him, were not in vaine. This (beloued) ought greatly to encourage vs, that when we ſeeke and cannot perceyue that we finde, not to giue ouer: For doubtles in the end we ſhall well perceyue that our ſeeking, and our ſorrowing after him, hath bin to good purpoſe.

Many ſeeke, and becauſe they find not euen according to their deſire at the firſt, they fayn t and giue ouer: but we muſt remember that Chriſt is very precious, and if with long and great ſeeking, we finde that we haue gotten euen ſome little holde for to retain him with vs, it is much. To gaine but a little in Heauenly things, euen with

very great labour and trauell is much.

And now to the laſt verſe which I did reade, *The Watch-men that went about the Cittie found mee, they ſmote me, and wounded mee: the Watch-men of the walles tooke away my vaile from me.*

Here now ſhee reporteth what grieuous calamitie and affliction came vppon her. *The Watch-men found her,* and what doe they? Her wordes are plaine, that *they ſmote her, and wounded her, and tooke away her vaile.* For vnder theſe ſpeeches ſhe ſetteth forth a very great affliction that light vpon her, as it ſhal appeare, if we do marke the circumſtances well in all things.

Firſt, her conſcience accuſeth her how vnkindely ſhee hath dealt towards Chriſt, who hath withdrawne himſelfe worthily for the ſame. Then next, her protector hiding away himſelfe. What a feare is it vnto a tender Virgin in the Night, to fall into the handes of rough and churliſh fellowes? yea, when they be highly diſpleaſed with her as it appeareth they are: For they beate her, and that grieuouſly, for they doe wound her.

Oh what a cruelty is this, what ſauage men are theſe? Yea, marke further who they be.

They

They be the Watchmen, euen they that of all others ſhould chiefly defende and comfort her: For, the watch-men are the ſhepheards, the paſtors and teachers.

The Prophets of God doe complaine of the wicked prieſts in the time of the Law, how they did afflict the godly. And how great are the calamityes which the ſincere profeſſors of the Goſpell haue ſuffered a long time, I may ſay many hundred yeers, at the hands of the proud Romiſh prelats? what is the cauſe that they be ſo diſpleaſed? Surely, becauſe ſhee ſeeketh after Chriſt. They will beare with any diſorder ſauing that. They be proud, they be pōpous, they be delicate, they be blinde, euen like to the blinde Phariſies. If any ryot or exceſſe be committed, theſe Watchmen be good fellowes: but if tthey ſeeke Chriſt, that is intollerable, that is to their diſgrace, vpon ſuch they fall, they beate & wound them. And as the mother of all heere complayneth, they take away her vaile. For virgins to haue a vayle, it was for modeſtie and chaſtitie, and ſo it was an honour. They doe deface and diſhonour her all that they can: for they will make as though ſhee were an Harlot.

They

They tearme them that ſeeke Chriſt Heretikes, Schiſmatikes, and fantaſticall. They lay all the moſt vile reproaches vpon them which they can deuiſe. Let it not then trouble vs when it commeth to paſſe, that thoſe which haue the office and place to teach the Church, doe beate and wound and diſgrace her.

Did not the Builders refuſe Chriſt himſelfe the head corner ſtone? What maruel thē, thogh they beate his ſeruāts? thus much for this time.

THE

The tenth Sermon.

CHAP. V.

7 *I charge you O daughters of Ieruſalem, if you finde my Welbeloued, that you tell him that I am ſicke of loue.*

8 *O fayreſt among women, what is thy welbeloued more then another welbeloued, what is thy Welbeloued more thē another louer that thou doeſt ſo charge vs?*

9 *My welbeloued is white and ruddie, the chiefeſt of ten thouſand.*

10 *His head is as fine gold, his lockes curled, and blacke as a rauen.*

11 *His eyes are like doues vpon the riuers of waters, which are waſht with milke, and remaine by the full veſſels.*

12 *His cheekes are as a bed of ſpices, and as ſweete flowers, and his lippes like lillies dropping downe pure myrrhe.*

13 *His hands like rings of golde, ſet with the Chryſolite: his belly like white Iuorie,*

couered

couered with Saphires.

14 *His legges are as of pillars of Marble, set vpon sockets of fine golde, his countenance as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.*

15 *His mouth is as sweet things, and he is wholy delectable, this is my welbeloued, this is my Louer, O daughters of Ierusalem.*

16 *O the fayrest among women, whether is thy welbeloued gone, whether is thy welbeloued turned aside, that we may seeke him with thee.*

17 *My welbeloued is gone downe into his garden, to the beds of spices, that he may feede in the gardens, and gather the Lillies.*

IN the former parte of this Chapter, we haue seen how the Bride groome knocking & calling to raise his Spouse out of her sleepe, euen from her carnall security; what excuses she made, how vnkindly, and vndutifully she dealte with him. Moreouer we haue seene, how he for the same vnkindnes did hide himselfe from her, shee seeketh after him, & falleth into the hands of the Watchmen, euen

euen into the hands of proud Prelates, and falſe Paſtors, which dealt very cruelly with her, they did not kill her, for God will not ſuffer his Church to be rooted out.

Nay, you ſhall ſee, that they did not with all their rough tyranny ſo much as once daunt or diſcourage her from ſeeking after Chriſt. They beate her, they wounded her, and tooke away her vaile; doth ſhe now ſhrinke for feare, or dooth ſhee hide her head, and giue ouer ſeeking? No verily, ſhee goeth on in her ſearch, & is more vehement then before: when the fleſh had preuayled to caſt her into a ſleepe thoſe ſeemed great and waighty reaſons to withhold her: *I haue put off my coat, and I haue waſhed my feete For how* (ſayeth ſhee) *ſhall I put it on, and how ſhall I foule them?*

Chriſt ſeemeth to require that at her hands which was without all reaſon, but after he had touched her inwardly with his ſpirite, ſhe ſayth not, I haue ſought him, & by ſeeking haue bin beatē, wounded and diſgraced, how ſhall I ſeeke him any longer? There is now a fire kindled in her which none can quench, the fleſh

now

with all the excuſes which it can make, is put downe.

The faithfull doe neuer loue Chriſt, nor ſeeke after him with more burning zeale then in time of hote perſecution. All experience hath taught this from time to time. And the practiſe of the Spouſe doth here fully ſhew it. It was to this end & purpoſe that he put in his hand at the hole of th dore, and left that ſweet Myrrhe with which her fingers did droppe. The truth is, that in thoſe times of calamity, the Lord ſeemeth to hide himſelfe away, and to be diſpleaſed for the ſinnes of his people, yea euen to bee farre from them: but yet by that inward touch, by putting in his hand he is very neere vnto them: he doth ſupport and comfort them moſt mightily.

Let vs therefore come to her Words, out of which theſe things are to bee gathered, *I charge you O daughters of Ieruſalem &c.* She doth heere lay a ſtraight charge againe vpon her companions: for her words are, I binde you with an oath, or I doe cauſe you to ſweare. This ſheweth great vehemency, as it ſhall alſo appeare by their anſwer. Now for the matter of her

her charge, thus it ſtandeth, *If you finde my welbeloued, what will you tell him that I am ſicke of loue?* The manner of her ſpeech, that ſhee ſayeth, *What will you tell him?* And then addeth, *That I am ſicke of loue*, doth ſhew a moſt vehemēt paſſion. For in deed the wordes are not vttered to ſay, If you find my beloued, tel him, but what will you tell him? This demaunding the queſtion, ſheweth that her loue did ſo appeare, that they muſt needs if they wil tell him any thing, tell him that ſhe is ſicke of loue.

This is exceeding great loue, that ſhee commeth to be loue ſicke. If the fleſh had borne ſway, that would haue reaſoned after another ſort, as thus: I opened the dore, and he withdrew himſelfe, and by that occaſion I haue ſuffered great calamity, therefore I haue ſmall cauſe to loue him, ſeeing hee doth hide himſelfe from me, and cauſe me to be thus ſtruckē and wounded, why ſhould I ſet my heart vpon him? The fleſh I ſay, would miniſter ſuch kind of reaſon, but the faithfull are not ledde by the wiſdom of the fleſh, but by the heauenly ſpirite which teacheth them the more they ſuffer for Chriſt,

the

the more to loue him. This is a thing paſſing all humane reaſon, that the Bride hauing fallen into ſo great affliction by ſeeking after her Bridegroome, is thereupon ſicke of loue.

The faithfull indeed reioyce in afflictions, it is an honour vnto them to ſuffer for Chriſt, and the more they ſuffer for his ſake, he doth ſo ſtrengthen them, and ſo worke in them, that the more they loue him. There is more zeale and more erneſt praier to God among the faithfull, in the times of affliction and perſecution, then in the time of proſperity and worldly peace: for then commonly men doe growe ſecure.

Thus hauing heard what the Spouſe ſayth to the daughters of *Ieruſalem*, Let vs now ſee what anſwer they do make: *O thou fayreſt among women what is thy Welbeloued more then another welbeloued, what is thy welbeloued more then another louer, that thou doeſt ſo charge vs?* Firſt of all wee may obſerue here, that theſe daughters of Ieruſalem doe behold and acknowledge a great beauty in the Spouſe, that they cal her the fayreſt among women. Such as be goodly to behold, if they fall into affli-

ction,

ction, that maketh them to seeme base and and contemptible. The Church then being beaten and wounded by the Watchmen, and her vaile taken from her, beeing (I say) thus dishonoured and disgraced: what beautie could they behold in her?

Afflictions do make base and contemptible to the outward shew: but the beautie of the Church is not outwards, in the thinges of this life, but in spirituall ornaments, which are not diminished or dimmed by afflictiõs, but do thẽ in deed shine brighteſt of all. For, in the times of the greateſt persecutions, when the godly are imprisoned, racked, and tormented, you shall behold their stedfast Faith, their feruent zeale, their patience, their contempt of this world, with many other vertues: for which the daughters of Ierusalem, euen the weaker sorte, which are not as yet fully come to Christ, doe commend the Spouse to bee the fayreſt amongst Women.

Doubtles, the very Tyrants and persecutors themselues, are sometimes constrained to wonder at the glorie of the Faith, and patience of the Martyrs.

Then in the next place, wee may note,

how theſe daughters of Ieruſalem, doe as it were wonder why ſhe is ſo earneſt in ſeeking her well-beloued, that ſhee dooth ſo charge them with an Oathe, to tell them that ſhe is ſicke of loue: and herevppon they enquire and aske her what there is in him more then in another well-beloued: For, if there bee not an excellencie in him aboue all others, why ſhould ſhe be ſo vehement in ſeeking him?

We do account it a vanitie to be vehement in ſeeking that which is little worth. Heere is a very ſpeciall thing to be obſerued: and that is, that the earneſt ſeeking of the Faithfull after Chriſt, is a meane to ſtyrre vp others to enquire what hee is, or what there is in him.

Reaſon doth leade men thus farre, when they ſee that no threatnings, no bonds, no tortures, nor ſufferings can preuayle, but that the Faithfull do become more earneſt in ſeeking Chriſt, to ſay within themſelues out of all doubt there is ſome great thing that carryeth theſe men: it is no ſmall benefite for which they will endure all theſe things. Heerevpon they begin to enquire what Chriſt is: *What is thy well-beloued* (ſay they) *more then another wel-beloued, Oh thou fay-*

fayreſt among women : What is thy wel-beloued, more then another Louer, that thou doeſt ſo charge vs?

Heere is one great ſtep towardes Eternall life, when men doo begin to enquire after the Lorde Ieſus Chriſt, and are deſirous to knowe what his benefits and graces be. Where we may note, what a good thing it is to be zealous and earneſt in the profeſſion of the Goſpell, and in ſeeking the Lorde Ieſus Chriſt. Oh it winneth ſoules: for it cauſeth ſuch as had little regard, to enter into the conſideration what *CHRIST* is, when they ſee others ſo earneſtly bent, and cannot be driuen back by no meanes from ſeeking after him. And when there is a coldnes, eſpecially in the miniſters of the Goſpell, ſo that they ſeeke more earneſtly after the things of this life, then they doe, to ſet vp the Kingdome of God : Dooth it not as it were beate into the heads of the ignorant and ſimpler ſort, that the Goſpell is a thing of no very great price? For, if it were worth the while, if it ſhould bring ſuch felicitie, would not the Teachers themſelues ſet more by it, then by the tranſitory things of this life?

What is this but to lay ſtumbling blocks

before the lame, and to cause the blinde to goe out of theyr way, which thing God doth accurse in the Law? Woe be vnto them therefore, who ought to be most zealous of all others in forsaking this worlde, and seeking after Christ, that by their zeale they might styrre vp such as know not the Lord, to enquire what the matter is about which they be so vehement: and they be so cold that way, and so studious for this world, that they driue them backe.

Beloued, know this also, that whosoeue he be, though meane in the world, that in simplicitie and singlenes of heart, with earnest zeale ioyned with meeknesse doth seeke the Lord, hee shall be a meanes, yea, euen an happie instrument, to winne others.

Let vs proceede: The Daughters of Ierusalem demaund, *What is thy Wel-beloued, more then an other Well-beloued?* And hereupon shee describeth him vnto them.

First, before wee enter into the examination of the particulars, wee may consider in generall, how that shee setteth foorth here the Riches, the Dignitie, the Glorie, and Beautie of Christ.

This

This is the office of the Church to publiſh Chriſt crucified. And now moſt willingly ſhe dooth it, when the daughters of Ieruſalem are ſo inquiſitiue for to knowe him.

Shee deſcribeth him at large, to the end that it may appeare there is good cauſe to mooue her ſo earneſtly to ſeeke him, and that it may be knowne what a rich jewell they obtaine that doe finde him. Moreouer, doe you not ſee here that it is not perſecution that can ſtoppe the mouth of the Church, or make her keepe ſilence, but ſhe will publiſh and lay open the glorie, and the praiſe of her *Well-beloued*.

Oh how the cruell enemyes do ſtorme, how they gnaſh their Teeth, how they fret and rage? when the ſincere and holy doctrine of Chriſt, is publiſhed, which doeth lay opē the rich treaſures of his grace, that in him there is all fullnes of good things, to make men happie: and yet for theyr furie, the faithfull ſeruants of the Lord will not be ſilent, but deſcribe him and paynte him forth. True it is, when Chriſt is earneſtly ſought, and when his graces are throughly layde open, it doeth diſpleaſe prowde Heretikes, which ſtand to main-

taine their owne doctrine and wicked errors. Alſo the gloſing hypocrites which boaſt of their owne merites, and glory in themſelues cannot abide it. Yea ſuch as haue made their belly their god, that mind Earthly things are angry, becauſe it is a great rebuke vnto them, that Chriſt being ſo excellent, they preferre the world before him. They would faine ſeeme good being altogether worldly: and when it is made manifeſt that they make a blinde and a wicked choyce in ſetting much by the world, and ſo little by Chriſt, it doth diſgrace them. But how ſoeuer they doe take it, the holy Church deſcribeth Chriſt And in the firſt place ſhee ſpeaketh of his colour and complection, ſaying, *My welbeloued is white and ruddy.* Theſe two colours together doe ſhew a right excellent conſtitution of body, and alſo a very perfect beauty.

The Lord is goodly and glorious, hee is ſtrong, and ſhall remaine for euer in perfect health. Yea he is ſo excellent, that ſhe ſayth, *He is the chiefe of ten thouſand.* Or as the very words are, *He is the Standard bearer of ten thouſand.* He doth indeed very far excell all creatures whatſoeuer, euen

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men and Angels: and therefore ſhe ſayeth, *Hee is euen as the Standard bearer of ten thouſand.*

Then comming to the ſeuerall partes ſhee ſayeth, *That his head is as fine golde:* Two names of gold indeed are here vſed: the firſt of them ſignifying fine golde: the other, gold that is purified. Hereby ſhee ſetteth forth how excellent, how glorious, how rich and ſhining the heade of Chriſt is. For among earthly thinges, what is comparable to the fine gold? If there be a purpoſe to ſignifie ſomewhat by euery part of the body, then by the head of Chriſt we may vnderſtand the Deity. *I would haue you to know* (ſayth S. *Paul*) *that Chriſt is the head of euery man, that the man is the head of the woman, and that God is the head of Chriſt*, 1. Cor. 11. v. 3. But I doe not hold it neceſſary to entrprete euery part, as ſignifying ſomewhat, but onely this, that the Spouſe deſcribing Chriſt, maketh her deſcription according to the parts of the naturall body of man, to the end, that it may be knowne that he is wholly, and altogether beautifull, delectable and precious. It was accounted beautifull in a young man to haue

blacke haire, and therefore ſhe ſayeth, *His locks are curled and blacke as a Rauen.*

But what, ſhall we take it, that here is any allowance of that Ruffian like wearing of long hayre, which is vſed in theſe dayes? No verily: For the *Nazarites*, which according to the lawe of God did weare long haire, did weare it after a moſt graue and ſober manner.

In the next place ſhee doeth praiſe his Eyes, ſaying: *His Eyes are as Doues vppon the riuers of waters*; Or thus more plainly, *His Eyes are as the eyes of Doues, which are beſide the riuers of waters.*

The eyes of the Doue (as it hath bin ſaid before) is a beautyfull eye, chaſte and ſingle. To the Doues therefore ſhe likeneth the eyes of her Spouſe. And to ſet out a further clearenеſſe and beautie in them: Here is mention of thoſe doues, which are by the riuers of cleare waters, as the doues doe delight.

Then further ſhe ſayeth, *They be waſhed with milke:* (this is for a further brightnes) *and remaine* (as our Tranſlation ſaith) *by the full veſſels.* There is no ſpeech of veſſels in the Hebr: text: but thus the words do ſtād *they remaine vpon the fulnes.* And here we

must

must know that the word which he vseth, which may be called *Fulnes*, signifieth the hollow place in which a precious stone is set, for the precious stones set vpon rings, or in rowes vpon the Ephod, had their hollow places in which they were cunningly set, and so were called stones of fulnes, because they did in so fit sort fill their hollow places. Vnto this shee likeneth the eyes of her Spouse, saying: *That they remaine vpon the fulnes*: that is, they doo like precious stones that are set most cunningly fill their hollow places.

This is a speciall commendation of the Eyes in man or woman. For, if the Eyes do stand forth too much, it is a deformitie, as if we vse to say, goggle-eyed, and likewise if they be sunke in so deepe, that they be then, as we vse to tearme them, hollow eyed. The Bride-groome is neyther of these: his pure Eyes are as precious stones that are fitly set in their places. It followeth: *His cheekes are like a bed of Spices, and as sweete Flowers.*

Touching the latter clause, the word is translated *Flowers*, doth vsually signifie towers: but it hath bin taken here for flowers that grow vp in the beds of spices. If we

should

ſhould expound the words then after the vſuall ſignification, wee ſhould ſay as the Towers of thoſe which make ſweet ointments, but wee may more fitly take them to be the growne plants of thoſe that deale with ſpices and ſweete ointments, ſeeing the proper ſignification of the Word, is of greatneſſe.

His lippes are like Lillies, dropping down pure Myrrhe. The Lillies are faire and ſweet of themſelues, vnto thoſe ſhee compareth his lippes, adding moreouer, that they droppe pure Myrrhe. This is to bee referred vnto that holy and heauenly word, which proceedeth out of his mouth In the commendation of his Church, Chriſt ſayde, that *her lips did droppe as the honey combe*, and now ſhee ſayeth, That *his lippes doe droppe pure Myrrhe.* It is the ſame word which proceedeth from the mouth of either of them, but not after the ſame manner: for it hath proceeded from him as from the author thereof, it is his owne, it hath the high and ſoueraigne authority from him. The Church doth vtter it not as her own, but as hauing receiued it from him. True it is, that his lipps do drop pure myrrhe onely to his ſpouſe:

for

for the reprobate do cauſe by their obſtinacy, that this word *which commeth out of his mouth, is vnto them as a ſharpe ſword, by which they are ſlaine: yea it is a fire that doth burue them vp, it dooth vexe and torment them.* Reu. 11. Looke therefore vnto thy ſelfe, if the Word of the Lord bee ſweete and precious vnto thee, euen as the pure myrrhe: if thou take thy ioy and ſolace in it, as the Prophet reporteth of himſelfe, in Pſal. 119. then art thou a childe of the Church. The light and power of the heauenly word dooth dwell in thee, and thou doeſt obey it. But if it be bitter vnto thee, becauſe it diſcloſeth the foule wickedneſſe of thy hart, if it torment thee, that thou canſt not abide to heare it, but as it is written, Thou ſayeſt to the Prophets: *Propheſie vnto vs pleaſant things:* then wofull is thine eſtate, for thou loueſt darkneſſe more then light, becauſe thy workes be euill. It is a neceſſary thing that euery one looke well into this matter.

The next is, that ſhe ſayeth, *His hands are like rings of gold, ſet with Chryſolyte.* It may bee thus taken, that vpon hands are rings of gold, ſet with Chryſolite. The matter hath beene, and is to weare ringes

of

of golde, which are set with goodly precious stones. The difference is not great, whether way wee take it: eyther that his *Hands* are like those rings of golde, or that they be so adorned with them. This is the sense that all is rich and shining. The like sense there is in the next words: *His Belly is like white Iuory, couered with Saphyrs*: for these thinges are both beautifull and precious.

It followeth, *His Legges are as pillars of Marble set vpon sockets of fine golde, his countenance as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.* Heere is a fit representation of his legs, by pillars of marble, and set vppon sockets of fine golde, and of his stature, that hee is to looke vppon, as the Cedars of Lebanon. For I do take it manifest, that the countenaunce is to bee referred to his whole stature. For, it is as it should be said, looke vpon him, and he is of stature goodly & tall, euen like vnto the high Cedars of Lebanon. His mouth is as sweete things, and he is wholly delectable.

Very well wee may take the wordes thus: The roofe of his mouth is moste sweete. As if we should say, there commeth nothing out of his mouth, but that which

which is ſweete. Yea, ſhee will not ſtand to proſecute euery parte, but addeth a generall commendation: That hee is wholly delectable, or moſt to be deſired. From toppe to toe, hee is glorious and excellent. Wherefore hauing thus deſcribed him, ſhee concludeth with an exclamation. *This is my welbeloued, and this is my Louer, Oh daughters of Ieruſalem.*

Hauing ſuch a Louer as this whome ſhe hath deſcribed: Hath ſhe not good cauſe to ſeeke after him: yea, euen to be ſicke of loue for him?

This glorie, theſe Riches, this ſweetnes of *CHRIST* is hidden from the world, and this is the reaſon why men doe not long after him. Moſt admirable it is, that ſuch treaſures of Eternall life and happines are propounded in the Goſpell, and the ſame ſo lightly eſteemed. But doubtleſſe men cannot eſteeme that they ſee not.

The god of this World (ſayth Saint Paul) *hath blinded the mindes of the infidels, leaſt the light of the Goſpell of the glory of* Chriſt, *ſhould ſhine vnto them, who is the image of God.* 2. Corinth: 4. verſ. 4.

The Goſpell dooth ſhine moſt cleare and bright, the Church as wee ſee heere, pub-

publiſheth, and painteth out Chriſt Ieſus to bee moſt precious: but the Diuell is ſo great a Lord in the world, hee hath ſuch power, he beareth ſuch ſway, and worketh with ſuch efficacie in the heartes of men, that very few doe behold the light, very fewe are brought thus farre, as to embrace the ſauing health of the Lord.

Oh, how wretched is the ſtate of mankinde, that ſuch a *Redeemer* beeing publiſhed, cannot be brought to embrace him. But the Spouſe doth well, ſhe goeth on in performing her office: ſhe doth not onely ſeeke after him, euen ſicke with Loue, and will not with any cruelty be diſmayed, but alſo publiſheth and proclaimeth openly, what manner of one he is: ſhe deſcribeth his Riches and his glorie, euen to this ende, that ſuch as doo not yet know him, may be moued to ſeeke him, and to enjoy his benefites.

Now, whereas ſhee hath thus deſcribed her wel-beloued: let vs ſee what effect it worketh, For this appeareth by the next wordes, which bee theſe: *Whither is thy Well beloued gone, Oh thou fayreſt among women? Whither is thy welbeloued turned aſide, that wee may ſeeke him with thee?*

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The Daughters of Ieruſalem hearing that hee is ſo goodly a perſon, are ſtyrred vppe, and enflamed with a deſire to ſeeke him: This is the effect which her ſpeech in commendation of Chriſt wrought. And this is a ſingular effect, and ſuch as indeed is to be reckoned among the chiefe actions vnder heauen that are wrought by men. For, if we do regard it firſt, in reſpect of the Lord, what a worthy thing is it to ſpread the glory of *CHRIST*? And then if wee reſpect men, what a worke of charitie is it to drawe men into the way of Saluation? Here may the miniſters of the Goſpell learne what their chiefe dutie is: for that which dooth draw men chiefly to loue, and to ſeeke after Chriſt, that is their chiefe worke: there are they to employ all their chiefe force. And you may ſee here that it is the deſcribing of Chriſt, euen the opening and diſplaying of the rich Treaſures & graces which be in him that draweth men to ſeeke him. Who will ſeeke that which hee knoweth not? And who will not ſeeke after a precious jewell?

Beholde therefore, how the holy Apoſtles, euen *Paul* and the reſt, doo paynte out Chriſt crucified? They doo lay open

in

in him that we ſhall finde a remedie for all our miſeryes. Then are all true paſtors and teachers to bee plenteous in publiſhing, and mainifeſting the graces and Heauenly bleſſings that be in the Lord Ieſus. For ſo ſhall they drawe men effectually to long after him, and to ſeeke him.
Here is a deſcription made by the Spouſe, as wee haue ſeene, but all vnder an Allegorie, for that is according to the whole courſe of this Song.

Let the miniſters of God lay open all things as plainly as may be: for that ſhall comfort the harts of the ſimple. Let them declare how *that hee is made vnto vs of God, Wiſedome, Righteouſnes, Sanctification, and Redemption.* 1. Cor: 1. *Let them open how he was made the curſe of the Law,* Galat: 3. *Yea, how hee made him ſinne for vs, that knew no ſinne, that wee in him might bee made the Righteouſnes of God.* 2. Cor. 5.

For theſe things being laid open, men will couet with the Apoſtle, Philip. 3. to be found in him, euen as we ſee how theſe daughters of Ieruſalem do now earneſtly enquire whether he is gone, that they may ſeeke him. And marke well, how they ſay not ſimplie ſeeke him: but, that wee may

may ſeeke him, with thee. This is the right way to ſeeke him indeede, this is the onely way to finde him, when anie doe ſeeke Chriſt with the Church.

You haue many heretikes, and ſchiſmatikes, which hauing come to ſome knowledge of Chriſt, growe into a pride and diſdayne to ſeeke him with the Church; ſcatter, and will needs ſeeke him by themſelues. But here is their reward, they find the diuell; they finde not Chriſt. Let vs learn here to enquire for him of the ſpouſe and to ſeeke him with her, for ſo it is ſaid, That we may ſeeke him with thee.

And ſee now what followeth: For, the Church maketh anſwer, and telleth them where they ſhall ſeeke him. Her words are the beginning of the next chapter, but more rightly they are to be added to this chapter. And thus they be: *My well-beloued is gone downe into his Garden, to the beds of ſpices, that he may feed in the Gardens, and gather the Lyllies. I am my welbeloueds, & my wel beloued is mine, who feedeth among the Lyllies.* Here we may obſerue diuers points, as firſt that ſhee telleth them *Chriſt is in his garden among the ſweet Spices & delectable flowers*, that is to ſay, *he is in his*

Church. If they wil find him, there he is to be found, & not any were elſe: ſecondly, it is apparant, that althogh Chriſt do after a ſorte withdrawe himſelfe, ſo that the Church in great affliction doth ſeeke him ſorrowing, yet ſhee knoweth that he is with her. The Faithfull do feele Chriſt preſent, but they doe not feele him in that meaſure which they do wiſh. If it were not ſo, how could the Spouſe ſo crye out after him in ſeeking, and yet tell them that hee is in the garden?

Here is the conſolation of the Faithfull, that howſoeuer the Lord dooth ſeme to withdraw and hide himſelf away from them for a time, yet they be ſure hee cannot forſake his Church, and they ſhall find him. And for this cauſe, yee ſee how ſhe gloryeth in the next words, of that communion that is betweene her and Chriſt:

I am (ſayeth ſhe) *my welbeloueds, and he is mine, that feedeth among the Lylyes.* If ſhee be his, if ſhee wholly deuote herſelfe to liue vnto him, and to ſet forth his glory: (for the Faithful are ſo to be Conſecrated vnto him in ſoule and body, as to liue vnto him) and on the other ſide, if hee with all his riches and glorie be hers, as with aſ-

ſurance

ſurance of Faith ſhe doth glorie, then how can it be but ſhe ſhall finde him? Yea, ſhe hath found him, for the Lord dooth enter in, to all that open vnto him: albeeit in their calamityes hee ſeemeth to haue hidden himſelfe.

Oh, what a treaſure hath that Soule, which with a true and liuely Faith can ſay, I am the Lords, and the Lord is mine, he feedeth among the Lyllies, he wil feede me with all ſweete things.

Let vs make it our whole ſtudy to come to this: For, hee that hath CHRIST, hath all.

The eleuenth Sermon.

CHAP. VI.

1. *Thou art fayre my Loue, as Tirzal, comely as Ieruſalem, terrible as an Armey with Banners.*

2. *Turne away thine eyes from me, for they ouer-come mee: thine haire is like a flocke of Goates, which looke downe from Gilead.*

3. *Thy teeth are like a flocke of ſheep, which go vp from the waſhing, which euery one bring*

out twinnes, and none is barren among them.

4. Thy temples are within thy lockes, as a piece of a Pomegranate.

5. There are three-score Queenes, and foure-score Concubines, and of the Damsells without number.

6. But my Doue is alone, and my vndefiled, shee is the onely daughter of her Mother, & she is deare to her that bare her: the daughters haue seene her, and counted her blessed, euen the Queenes and the concubines, and they haue praised her.

6. Who is shee that looketh foorth as the Morning, faire as the Moone, pure as the Sunne, terrible as an Armey with Banners?

8. I went downe to the garden of Nuttes, to see the fruits of the valley, to see if the Vine budded, and if the Pomegranates flourished.

9. I knew nothing, my soule set mee as the chariots of my Noble people.

10. Returne, returne, Oh Shulamite: returne, returne, that wee may beholde thee. What shall you see in the Shulamite, but as the companie of an Armey?

IN this Chapter, and also in the next, the Lord IESVS doeth giue very great & singular commendations vnto his deere Spouse, testifying his loue and harty affection towards her. Hauing praised her greatly in the fourth Chapter, it may bee demaunded, why he doth it againe after the same manner, and in diuers things with the same words? Indeed this may be demaunded, least wee might imagine that here were a tedious and a needlesse repetition.

The truth is, that this commendation is not superfluous, but cometh very fitly for the consolation of the Spouse. For you haue seene in the beginning of the former Chapter, what a fault she committed, how vnkindely she dealt with Christ, how he (as displeased) withdrew himselfe, so that she fell into great affliction. She hath bewayled her offence, she hath sought after her sorrowing: And now least it might seeme that she had by her sinne, lost that her former beautie and commendations, yea, least there might seeme to remaine

ſome blot, or that his former liking were diminiſhed, hee doth giue her the ſame, or rather greater commendation thē before. This in general is the cauſe why the Lord doth againe commend his Church.

And here we beholde the great kindenes of the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, who doeth quite forget all offences cōmitted againſt him, as if they had neuer bin. He doeth not ſo much as once vpbraide his Spouſe with her vnkinde dealing, doubtleſſe the faithfull hauing felt and taſted how ſweet the Lord is, beeing made partakers of his great benefites, when they bee ouertaken with the Fleſh, and doo fall into vndutyfulnes towards Chriſt, are much diſmayed, fearing that now they cannot bee beautyfull and deare in his ſight. Now they haue deformed themſelues, how ſhould he loue them? Heere is therefore a ſpeciall comfort miniſtred, that they hauing lamented and bewayled their offences, ſeeking after him with an earneſt deſire, trauelling and heauy loaden, hee dooth refreſh them, hee doth embrace them, hee doth loue them, hee doth commend them, and delight in them, euen as if they had neuer dealt euill towards him.

What a ſweete Lorde is this? What a gracious Redeemer haue wee? Can any tongue expreſſe the riches of his Grace? Or, who is able any way to ſet forth the bountifulnes of this Lord? This ought not to encourage vs to do euill, that hee quite forgetteth all our offence, as if they had neuer bin done: when wee repent, and turne vnto him bewayling our tranſgreſſions, and thirſting for his grace: For, ſhall his kindnes increaſe our vnkindnes? Shall his Loue cauſe vs to hate him? Shall his well-doings towardes vs bee an occaſion that we ſhould diſhonour him? For what elſe doe all they that are emboldned to ſinne, but diſhonor him, hate him, and ſhewe vnkindeneſſe vnto him? Nay, his exceeding loue and kindnes muſt worke another effect in vs, and that is, to loue him with a vehement loue: For, doth not loue require loue againe: and is not kindnes to be rendred vnto kindnes?

Take holde of this beloued, let it not depart away from you, the Lord is kinde and mercifull, hee is bounteous and long-ſuffering, hee doth receyue poore ſinners that repent: therfore let vs with our whole hart loue him, let vs honour & obey him.

Let it not come neare vs, that his goodnes ſhould make vs nought: I ſpeake it, becauſe there bee many, who when they heare that Chriſt is ſo ready to forgiue, do euen boldly commit all manner of wickednes: for they hope of pardon. This is a moſt vile thing, a thing abhominable, for they do abuſe the graces of God, to their greater condēnation, for the holy Apoſtle vrging & requiring that men which profeſſe Chriſt, ſhould adorn the doctrine of God our Sauiour, by their godly deedes, addeth this golden ſentence: ſaying, *For the grace of god hath appeared, which bringeth ſaluation vnto all men, teaching vs, that denying vngodlineſſe and worldly luſts, wee ſhould liue ſoberly and iuſtly, and godly in this preſent world*: Tit. 2. verſe 11. 12. If the grace of God hath appeared to this ende, how farre bee they out of the right way, which take occaſion thereby to continue in ſinne? but let vs omit theſe, and come to the words of our text.

Thou art faire my loue as Tirza, comely as Ieruſalem, terrible as an army with banners. Theſe were two goodly Cities, Tirza, and Ieruſalem, and vnto theſe for beauty and comlines, the Bride grome doth com-

compare his loue. And in the next clauſe he commendeth her terrible fortitude in battell. In the firſt Chapter he doth liken her to a troupe of horſes in the Chariots of Pharaoh. She is ſtrong and prompt to the battaile. And here commending her for the ſame thing, he ſaith, *that ſhe is terrible as an army with banners.* But vnto whome is her fortitude and valure thus terrible? Surely, euen vnto all her foes, but eſpecially vnto the infernall powers, for hauing put on the whole armor of God, ſhe ſtandeth in the ſpirituall battaile, ſhe reſiſteth and putteth diuels to flight. Thus we ſee, why he ſaith ſhe is terrible as an army with banners: an army that is ſtrong and marcheth with banners or enſignes, is very terrible to their aduerſaries to behold: euen ſo is the ſpouſe vnto the whole armies of diuels: But here we muſt obſerue, that the faithfull ſoule hath not this force of her ſelfe but is ſtrong and terrible in the mighty power of God. And Saint *Paul* teacheth that *we ſtand in that inuincible power of his, by putting on the whole armour of God.* Epheſ. 6. The Church of Rome hath turned all this into an outward ſhew, yea euen into a ridiculous

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mockery. For whereas the true Church militant goeth thus armed to the battaile, and is indeede, through the mighty power of God, terrible euen as an army with banners: they take away the word of God, and ſo depriue them of all the whole armor of God, and inſtead thereof, goe marching in proceſſion with great high banners vpon poles, as if the diuell were to be fought againſt, or feared with ſuch a ſhew.

Then it is added in the text: *Turne away thine eyes from me, for they ouercome me.* In the fourth Chapter hee vſed another ſpeech, but to the ſame effect: for whē he ſaid, that ſhe pluckt away his heart, with one of her eyes, or that ſhe had with the beauty, ſimplicity and chaſtity of her eyes euen wonne his heart, it expreſſeth a moſt vehement affection of loue towards her. Euen ſo in this place the beauty of her eyes doeth affect him in maruelous manner. The ſence is very plaine, but the Phraſe of ſpeeech is not ſo plaine: and therefore taken diuers wayes. For ſome do take it that he doth not ſay, turne away thine eyes from me: but turne thine eyes towards me. For Chriſt doth not meane

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that the Church ſhould turne the eyes of her faith from him. And then the other clauſe they doe expound thus, that they may lift me vp, that is, with conſolation. This doeth highly commend the glorious beauty of faith and moſt true it is, as Chriſt ſaid before: *My Doue that dwelleſt in the clift of the rocke in my hollow place of the ſtaires, ſhew me thy face, make mee to heare thy voyce, &c.* So heare it is not his meaning, but that ſhee ſhould turne her eyes towards him, and not turne them away from him: but yet ſurely (as I take it) the words are to be tranſlated thus, *Turne thine eyes from me, for they ouercome me.* It is a kind of ſpeech that doth in the higheſt ſort that can be, expreſſe how much the beauty of her eyes doth delight him. For euen as ſhe ſaid ſhe was ſicke of loue, ſo he ſaith that he is, as it were ouercome with loue. Doubtleſſe there is not any way to expreſſe a greater liking. Is the beauty then and the glory of faith (for that is the eye, or rather the eyes of the ſoule) ſo excellent in the eyes of the Lord, and ſhall not we labour to obtaine ſo precious a gift? O beloued, the more ſtedfaſtly wee truſt in the Lord: the more acceptable it is vn-

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to him, the more wee doe glorifie him. Did he not euen wonder at the faith of the Cananitish woman, saying: *O woman great is thy faith, be it vnto thee euen as thou desirest?* Math. 15. And also Iesus marueiled at the faith of the Centurion, Luk. 7. Let vs not harken to the blasphemous voyce of the Papists, which affirme that it is arrogancy and wicked presumption for men to assure themselues of the fauour of Christ: and that it is humility to be alwayes in doubt. Indeede because their faith is reposed in their owne works and merites, they may right well stand in doubt: but all that rest in the promises of GOD, euen in his free mercy in Christ, what cause is there that they should doubt? Is God vntrue of his promise? Yea all they which will not beliue but doubt, doe make God a lyar, 1. Iohn 5. which is blasphemous.

It followeth: *Thine haire is like a flocke of Goates, which looke downe to Mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheepe, which go vp from the washing, which euery one bring out twinnes, and none is barren among them. Thy temples are within thy locks as a peece of a Pomegranate.* I ioyne all these toge-

togeather, becauſe we had them before in Chap. 4. and in the very ſame words, only one word excepted, and that is, that he likeneth her teeth heere, as the word is in this place, to a flock of ewes: and in chap. 4. he calleth them a flocke of equall bigneſſe, or as it were cut of equall ſtature and proportion. I neede not ſtand heere againe in expoſition, but only thus much the Lord will haue his Church to know, that vpon her repentance, her fault is forgotte, he doth not, nor wil not ſo much as once vpbraid her therwith. This kindnes of our Lord ought we to imitate, which is no eaſie thing vnto fleſh and bloud. For let a man ſhew vnkindneſſe and doe iniury vnto men, they will not forget it very readily, they will quickly vpbrayde, and caſt each other in the teeth. Therefore here is a great vertue to be imitated.

In the words that follow, there is yet a further and a more ample declaration of the glorious beauty and rich decking of the Church. The firſt part of the words are thus: *There are threeſcore Queenes, and foureſcore Concubines, and virgins without number.* We reade that King *Salomon* had ſeuen hundred Queenes, and three hun-

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dred Concubines, 1. King 11. 3. If these be the wiues and Concubines of Salomon, which ate heere mentioned, then he wrote this song before he did come to that former exeesiue number. Bu- it seemeth to me that he doth not speake of Salomons Queenes and concubines, but as if hee should say, let there bee threescore Queenes and foreſcore concubines, and Virgins without number. Or thus, howsoeuer it be that there be many Queenes, and many concubines, with an infinite number of virgins. Queenes are of great dignity, they bee attyred with costly things. And the Kings in old time had also beside their Queenes, Concubines: these were beautifull and in rich attire, according to the glory of Princes. Then also the Queenes (as it is the manner) had their maidens of honour to attend vpon them, and likewise virgins did waite vpon the Concubines, so that here is a very great number of beautifull damsels, which are also in goodly attire. Then in a word, to come to the matter, thus it is, if the Lord should say, set all the goodly Queenes and Concubines of the great Kings and Princes of the world, with all

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the companie of their Virgines together, it is a goodly shew, there is glorie, beautie, and riches, but yet they are nothing comparable to my Loue, her beautie and glorie, farre excelleth them all; For, you see how he addeth in the next verse, *but my doue is alone.* How is she alone? She is alone, or she is onely beautifull, rich, and honorable. The birth, or the honour touching the parentage of Queenes, the beauty and decking of Concubines and virgins, is great and highly esteemed in the eyes of the world: but it is not comparable to the honor, beauty, and rich ornaments of my doue, of my vndefiled, she standeth alone in all excellency. All these Queenes and goodly women come not nigh her in any thing, she is without peere. For let vs consider euery particular. It is a thing of great account in the world to be the daughters of mighty Princes, to be the wiues and concubines of Kings: but what is the dignity of this their birth, if you doe compare it with the dignity and honour of the birth of the Church? It is a spirituall birth, yea the faithfull bee all borne of God. Then looke how the Lord God farre excelleth in honour the

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Kings of the earth, ſo his children excell their children, but they cannot giue vnto them the honour of this Heauenly byrth, the Church only hath it, and therefore he ſaith, ſhe is the onely daughter of her mother, deare vnto her that bare her, or as the word is, pure to her that broght her forth. This it is, *Ieruſalem* (as S. Paul ſaith) *which is frõ aboue, which is mother of vs all*, ſhe is mother of the whole church vpon earth: & ſhe is Mother vnto none elſe. All that be her children, be the children of the moſt High. Thus we ſee how for dignity and honour in birth, ſhe farre excelleth all the Queenes in the world. Then if we reſpect beautie and rich ornaments, what is all the beautie of the Queenes, the concubines, and maydens of Honour, and all their gorgious attyre and iewells, compared with her ſpirituall ornaments and beautie, euen the rich graces of the holy Ghoſt, by which ſhee is comly in the eyes of God? Behold how honourable, and how beautifull they be in the eyes of God, which are rich in Faith. And albeit our blind nature is ſuch, as it is much moued with the pompe and glittering ſhew of the world, and cãnot ſee into the glorie & riches of Faith: or with what good-

goodly ornaments it decketh the ſoule, eſpecially in poor men, which are in baſe eſtate: yet it pleaſeth God ſomtime to make the great ones in the world euen to wonder at the beautie and glorie of his church. And therefore it is added, the daughters haue ſeen her, and counted her bleſſed, the Queens and concubines, and they praiſed her. Then as I ſay, ſometimes the Lords people, the Lords Nation, hath bin ſo honoured by God here in the world, euen in the ſight of men, that the very Heathen nations haue confeſſed that they were happie, God had done great things for them. And marke the order heere vſed for their praiſe: For he ſaith firſt, *that the Daughters ſaw her, and counted her Bleſſed.*

Theſe be the virgins that hee ſpake of, which are without number. Theſe virgins do much behold the beauty of the quees and concubines: yea, they looke alſo vpon their owne rich Attire, and they account theſe great things, but ſo ſoon as euer they behold her, ſhe ſo dimmeth all their beautie and glory, ſo that they ſet their Eyes vpon her, and pronounce her bleſſed. Yea, the Queens and the concubines alſo which glory in their own pompe and dig-

nitie, do extoll her. For in the next verſe the ſpeech of their wonderment at her, is thus expreſſed, *Who is this that looketh forth as the Morning, fayre as the Moone, pure as the Sunne, terrible as an Armey with Banners?* Here be foure things, by which (as you ſee) they commend her wonderfull beautie. The firſt is the Morning, for they wondering, demaund: Who is this that looketh foorth as the Morning?

It is a moſt goodly ſight to ſee how the bright Morning ſpreadeth forth: And alſo the Moone, which is the ſeconde, when it is cleare, ſheweth a great beauty in the night. But the brightnes and puritie of the Sunne, vnto which they liken her in the third place, is farre beyond all.

And then in the laſt place, they ſay that ſhe is terrible as an Armey with banners, This terror as we noted before, is chiefly to the infernall ſpirites, euen the Diuells, againſt whom ſhe is armed with the whole armour of God: but yet theſe alſo, doe acknowledge a terrour and a Maieſtie.

They that are conuerſant in reading the holy Scriptures can tell, that God hath ſundry times greatly magnified his church in the eyes of the worlde.

Now

Now let vs consider the whole matter to our owne comfort. How good is our estate, how well is it with vs: euen when wee be poore, and base, and miserable in the world, if wee be of this number? We are not Kings, we are not Queens, we are not great Lords; we are not Ladyes, wee are not in wealth, nor in pleasures: Let vs neuer in murmuring sorte thinke that the Lord hath dealt more hardly with vs, because hee hath not giuen vs these: but set vs consider that he giueth vs the greater, euen the things which excell all the glorie of this world. Yea, and let Queens and great Ladyes learne heere, that their greatest glorie is not in their parentage, in their beautie, riches, and ornaments, but if they be the true children of the church, if they be regenerate, euen born of God, and decked with the giftes and graces of the holie Ghost: let them, I say, learne if they wil be wise, to esteeme this heauenly byrth, these spirituall treasures and beauty aboue all other. We hold it great follie, euen in Kings and Queenes, and in all the great Lordes and Ladyes, if they so stand vpon the honour of their byrth, and doe so glorie in their worldly pomp and riches, and

are ſo crowned in earthly pleaſures, as they thinke not vppon, nor eſteeme the dignitie of the ſpirituall byrth, but ſet light by the Heauenly ornaments: becauſe in ſo dooing, they eſteeme very droſſe aboue the pure Gold.

How then can we be excuſed? which hauing but euen as it were droppes, yea, but the ſcraps or crummes of theſe worldly things, wherewith Kings and Queenes abound, do yet ſo eſteem them, as that we looke not after thoſe great things, which are beſtowed vpon the Church: for, we eſteeme euen the droſſe of droſſe, aboue all. Let therefore this great prayſe, which the Lord giueth to his Spouſe, that ſet all the Queenes and Honourable-women in the world together, their dignitie, beautie, and rich Ornaments, are nothing vnto hers, moue vs to ſeeke to be of that Societie.

Is not this a worthie thing to be conſidered? Is it not a ſingular comfort, that there is more dignitie, more honour, more true glory and riches in the ſoule of one poore man or woman, that hath the true & liuelie Faith of Chriſt, then there is in all the Kings and Queenes of the Earth? It may be obiected, that the glorie of the Kings is grea-

greater then the glory of the Queenes: then seeing the Lord dooth meane to commend the dignity and beautie of his Spouse by comparison, why doeth hee not compare her with the highest? For answer to this, you must note that the Church is brought in vnder the person of a woman, and therefore she is compared with women.

As a Queene shee is compared with other Queenes, and shee standeth alone in her glory. Also this is to bee vnderstood, that by the Queenes and Concubines, and Virgins, are meant the Nations kingdoms & prouinces with all their glory: whereby you may see that the highest glory of Kings and Princes is comprehended. Wee will proceed: *I went downe to the garden of Nuts, to see the fruites of the valley, to see if the Vine budded, and if the Pome-granates flourished. I knew not, my soule set me as the Chariots of my noble people.*

Hitherto, as you haue seene, in this Chapter, Christ hath highly commended his Church, to this end as I noted vnto you, that he had quite forgotten her vnkind dealing towards him, and that there

remayned no blot of her offence, but all is waſhed away vpon her hearty repen- pentance, and earneſt ſeeking after him. Yet he withdrew himſelfe at the time of her vnkind dealing: but not for any loa- thing, but for another purpoſe, as heere now he mentioneth. For this is out of doubt, that the Lord dooth here ſpeake to comfort his Spouſe, and not to men- tion any thing to vpbraid her withall. He maketh mention of a going downe vnto her, hee ſpeaketh of a time paſt, euen that time which is mentioned in the former Chapter, when he found her a ſleepe. The Church is called a Garden, *I went down to the garden*, ſayth he. And heere it is tran- ſlated, the garden of nuts: beeing gene- rally ſo taken by the Hebrew Rabbines. The word which they take to ſignifie the nut, is not found elſwhere in all the ſcrip- tures. And ſurely it ſeemeth a ſtraunge manner of ſpeech to ſay, I went down to the garden of nuts: and then mentioneth not that he went to ſee the nut-trees, but to ſee the fruits of the valley, whether the vine did budde, or Pomegranates flouri- ſhed. They doe but gueſſe that the word ſhould ſignifie eyther nut, or nut tree. It

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is farre more fitte to take it thus, I went downe to the dreſſed garden. For *Egoz* which is taken to bee the nut, may be deriued of *gazaz*, which ſignifieth to cut or to ſhare. And ſo as I ſayde, it ſeemeth moſt fitte to take it thus: I went downe into the dreſſed garden. For by this ſpeech may bee vnderſtood all the coſt and labor which the Lord beſtowed vpon his vineyard, by the hands of his ſeruants the prophets and Apoſtles, and by the Miniſtery of all other faithfull teachers. Looke where planting, watering, dreſſing, and al manner of labour and coſt is beſtowed, there fruites are expected: and therefore it followeth, that the Lord went downe to this his garden, to ſee the fruites of the valley, to ſee if the vine budded, and if the Pome-granates flouriſhed. Now heere the Spouſe faulted: for ſhee was fallen into ſecurity, and did not bring forth fruits anſwerable vnto ſo great graces as were beſtowed vpon her.

Wee muſt needes confeſſe this, that where much hath beene beſtowed, much is reqnired: and yet the faithfulll oftentimes which haue had great teaching, daily admonitions, and many giftes of the

holy Ghoſt, doe faile thus farre, that their fruites are but ſlender.

Many complaints of this you ſhall find in the Prophets and great afflictions for the ſame. And here the Lord ſayeth, *I did not know.* What did hee not know? Not ſuch a flouriſhing of the plantes as ought to haue beene. And here as it ſeemeth, now after her repentance, the ſpeech is mittigated, leaſt he ſhould ſeeme to charge her ouer ſeuerely. For among mẽ things are ſometime, which when they do not flatly deny to haue beene, they ſay they knew not. But doth not Chriſt here vpbraid his Church? No verily, but hee mentioneth her fault, to this ende that ſhe may bee comforted, by knowing to what end hee ſeemed to depart after he had raiſed her out of her ſleepe. His affection is great towards her, which doth cauſe him to ſeeke her ſpeedy repentance. Hee departeth away moſt ſwiftly, as he ſayth: *My ſoule ſet me vpon the chariots of my noble people*: or as the word doth ſignifie, *of my franke or willing people.* The willingnes of the minde carrieth one ſpeedily. Thus it is then, as if a Louer ſhould make all haſt to fetch his friendes and companions to

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accompanie him to meete his Spouſe, and to beholde her comelineſſe and beauty in ſeeking to come vnto him. In the church when ſhee hath offended, and doth repent, there is a great glory of God ſette foorth, and a right ioyfull ſpectacle to the holy Angels of heauen, which doe reioyce when ſinners are conuerted to the Lord.

Therefore in the next words he calleth vpon her to returne. Why had ſhee not returned? had ſhee not ſought him, confeſſing and bewayling her offence: yes: He doth not vtter this ſpeech vnto her now: *Returne, returne, O Shulamite, returne, returne, that wee may looke vpon thee*: for what needed this vehement caling of her to repentance now, when ſhee had ſo earneſtly ſought him? But he mentioneth how he called vpon her, when ſhe refuſed to open vnto him. Shee is called the Shulamite of Ieruſalem, which was called *Shalem*, the name beeing deriued from peace: for the Church is at peace with God. He ſayde, *Returne, returne, and wee will looke vpon thee.* Euen hee with his companions. And then to ſtirre vp the ſame his companions to beholde the

the beauty and glory of her comming, he ſayeth: *What ſhall you ſee in the Shulamite*: and addeth, *as the company of Machanaim.*

The word ſignifieth the companies or tents of two armies that meet. When *Iacob* returned from *Laban*, as you may reade, Gen, 3 2. ver. 1. the Angels of God met him, and when *Iacob* ſaw them hee ſayde, *This is Gods hoſte*, and called the name of the ſame place *Machanaiim*. Vnto this ioyfull meeting of theſe two Armies, the Angels on the one part, and *Iacob* with his companions on the other, the Lord doth likē the returning of his ſpouſe vnto him: he with his holy Angels being one armie, and ſhee with her company an other. A moſt ioyfull meeting, a glorious ſight. Surely, wee are fallen a ſleepe, and I ſuppoſe that before the Lord depart, and wee bee afflicted, we wil not awake to ſeeke him.

THE

The twelfth Sermon.

CHAP. VII.

1 *How beautifull are thy goings with ſhoes O Princes daughter? the ioyntes of thy thighs are like iewels, the worke of the hands of a cunning workeman.*

2 *Thy nauill is as a round cuppe that wanteth not liquor, thy belly is as an heape of wheat, compaſſed about with Lillies.*

3 *Thy two breſts are as two young Roes that are twins.*

4 *Thy necke is as a Tower of Iuorie: thine eyes are like the fiſhpooles in Heſhbone, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy noſe is as the tower of Lebanon that looketh toward Damaſcus.*

5 *Thine head vpon thee is as skarlet, and the buſh of thine head like purple: the King is tyed in the rafters.*

6 *How fayre art thou, and how pleaſant art*

art thou, O my loue in pleasures ?

7 This thy stature is like a Palme tree, & thy breasts are like clusters.

8 I sayde I wil goe vp into the palme tree, I will take hold of her boughes: thy breasts shall now be like clusters of the vine, and the sauour of thy nose like apples.

9 And the rooфe of thy mouth like good wine, which goeth straight to my wel-beloued, and causeth the lips of the auncient to speake.

HEre is now an other commendation of the Church, by her seuerall partes. If you demand why this is: seeing heere is no speech of the Church, nor nothing that hath fallen out betwen the former commendation and this. Heere is a new occasion for all that of praising the Spouse. For as I noted, the former was for to comfort her, and to rayse her vp, after her afflictions and sorrowes, by assuring her that she was euen as precious and beautifull in his Eyes, as she was before her vnkinde dealing.

And

And now hauing ſhewed that his withdrawing himſelfe was for her good, euen to call her by a moſt ſerious Repentance: This calling did take effect, ſhe did return vnto him; And now this commendation, which is from the feet to the head, ſheweth how comly and delectable ſhe was in her repentance, or in her returning vnto him. We may learne then how pleaſant a thing it is in the eyes of the Lord, when his people that haue ſtepped awry and gon aſtray doe returne vnto him by vnfayned repentance. But let vs come to the words of the text. *How beautifull are thy goings with ſhoes O Princes daughter?* The word is, *thy goings, or thy treadings, or thy ſteps, or thy feete.* The ſence indeed cometh all to one, whether we take it of the feete, or of the treadings: for the beautie of the Feete, is in the right ſteppes. Here therefore by a word of admiration or wonderment is ſet forth how exceeding comely and beautyfull her feete and ſteps be: For he ſaith, *How beautyfull are thy goings?*

When men depart away from the Lord, their ſteps be vnſeemly, their waies be *crooked waies*, euen ſuch as the Lord God doth abhor. But *the Church ſeeking after Chriſt*, in

ſuch

ſuch ſort as you haue ſeen before, & approching neerer & neerer vnto him, her ſteps, her treadings, her feete, & all her wayes, are maruellous beautyfull in his eyes. And it is chiefly heere to be noted, that hee doth mention her ſhoes. Our tranſlation ſaith, *How beautifull are thy goings with ſhoes?* but more fullie to expreſſe the Sence, and according to the very words, we are to tranſlate it thus: How beautyfull are thy ſteps, or thy feete with thoſe ſhoes? For there is (as I may call it) the note of the demonſtratiue particle. They be in deed a ſpecial kinde of ſhooes, which ſhee had now on, which make her feete and goings ſo beautifull. You will demaund what ſhooes be theſe? And I doe demaund what bee the ſhooes which the Apoſtle willeth the faithfull to bee ſhod withall? *Epheſ.* 6. You know he ſaith, *your feete being ſhod*, and then he nameth with what ſhooes, ſaying: *with the preparation of the Goſpel of peace.* verſ. 15. The Bride had now got on theſe ſhooes, her Feet being ſhod, with the preparation of the Goſpell of peace. The Goſpell is the meſſage of Peace and reconciliation, between God and the world: aſſuring all thoſe of true Bleſſednes which come vnto him:

him: this doth prepare and arme their feet to go throgh all the difficulties of the way, which are very many, and very ſharpe. For he that hath once receyued the Faith, and vndoubted hope of the promiſes of the Goſpell, what difficultie in the way ſhall keepe him backe? True it is, that the Diuell doth make the way exceeding rugged and painefull to diſcourage, but the Bride is ſo ſhod that ſhe dooth not ſhrinke, but treadeth down all. And this is that which is ſo pleaſant in the Eyes of the Lord. In her carnall ſecurity, when ſhe was aſleepe, and he with moſt louing ſpeeches called vpon her, to open vnto him, her feete were not ſo well ſhod: For then, *I haue put off my coate, how ſhall I put it on: I haue waſhed my feete how ſhall I defile them?* Then euery litle matter in her way did withhold: but now, let there be what daungers, what Enemyes ſoeuer or difficultyes, ſhee will through, and ſhe will not giue ouer vntill ſhe finde him. And vppon this he cryeth out: *How beautifull are thy goings with thoſe ſhooes, Oh Princes daughter?* When men walke in their owne wayes, their ſteps are not good in the ſight of the Lord, howſoeuer men think highly of their own inuen-

tions:

tions: but when the Gospell doth prepare their feete to seeke the Lord, that is acceptable. Oh, let vs then (beloued) get on those shooes, which shall make our feete and our treadings so beautifull in the sight of the Lord. And which will also make vs so honourable in his sight, which he expresseth in the next words, saying: *O Princes daughter.* The Church is a most honorable Virgin, fit by her Parentage & birth, to be the wife of so great a King: For, she is the daughter of the Prince of all Princes, seeing *all the Faithfull are borne of God.* Indeed there is no worldly byrth nor parentage of that dignitie, to make a meete Spouse for Christ: For, what are men in themselues? But the heauenly birth, which is not of the will of man, but of God, is of most high dignitie. The Soule which is born of God, is neerly ioined vnto Christ, for the regeneration is in Christ. Therefore (I say) seeke true repentance, which is a most precious iewell.

It followeth, *The ioynts of thy thighes are like iewels, the worke of the hands of a cunning workeman.* Here also is a word not found else-where in the Scriptures. It is translated in our English, *the ioyntes.* The word doth

dooth ſignifie turnings, or things that doe compaſſe about. It may indeed be referred to the ioyntes, or it may be taken for the gyrdle. For, it was the manner that the Bryde did weare a gyrdle, of goodly rich and coſtly iewels. And here they are likened vnto jewells, made by a cunning workman. Then hee compareth the nauell to a rounde cup, that wanteth not liquour. A Childe in the Wombe of his Mother, receyueth his nouriſhment by the Nauell: heere is compariſon therefore of a cup, that hath alſo in it for nouriſhment.

Then he ſaith, that *her belly is as an heape of wheate compaſſed about with lyllies.* Here is fruitfulnes repreſented by the heape of wheate, and heere is pleaſant ſweetnes reſembled by the lillyes. Her two breaſts are compared as before in this Song. I will not ſtand againe vpon any interpretation. *Her necke is as a tower of yuorie.* This compariſon dooth not much differ from that former, where hee ſaith, *thy necke is as the tower of Dauid buylt for an Armorie:* ſauing that there he reſpecteth force, making mention of the ſhields of the mighty, and here the tower is of precious matter, and of

faire colour, the *yuorie* being a cleer white. *Thine Eyes are as the Fish-pooles in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim.* These were pooles of goodly cleere and pure water, at that gate in Ierusalem, by which the greatest concourse of people was entring in, and going out, for which cause the gate is called *Bathrabbim*, *Bath* is as much as to say the daughter, and *rabbim*, is of manie. *Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, that looketh toward Damascus.* This was a goodly tower in the house which *Salomon* built in the Forrest of *Lebanon.* Heere are the goodlyest and the statelyest things vppon Earth, brought in to resemble the Spouse. *Thine head vppon thee,* or as some doe take it, *in thine head,* that which is vppon thee, referring it to the attire of her head, *is like skarlet, and the bush of thine head like Purple.* The word *dallath*, signifieth that which is made smal or slēder: wherfore some take it for the haire of the head, for the smalnes of them, & some for the laces, that bindeth vp the haire. The matter is not great, but in the next clause there is some difficulty. *The King is tyed in the rafters,* saith our English translation. What meaneth that? That the King is affected to be neer his Spouse, and

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to behold her beauty & comlynes. Some do expound it thus: A King would be tyed in his galleryes. As if hee ſhould ſay, there is not any King that walketh in the middeſt of his glorie, euen in his goodly galleries, but if he ſhould behold thy beautie and glorie, it would cauſe him to ſtand amazed, he would no more looke vppon his owne glorie but vppon thine: ſo farre dooth thine excell all the glorie of this world. Surely eyther of theſe doth highly commend the beautie of the Church. If Chriſt be tyed in the galleries to behold her, or if an Earthly king would ſtand amazed at the ſight of her beauty: thē doth it farre ſurmount all the glorie and riches of this world. There be others that haue taken it thus: *Thy buſſe of haire is like the purple of a King, hanged or tyed in the galleries.* The diſtinguiſhing accent gainſayeth this: but it ſeemeth to be the moſt natiue ſence of the wordes. The Galleryes & large rooms of Kings were hanged with goodly Hangings of purple, or of ſome ſuch rich ſtuffe: vnto theſe hangings the haire of the Spouſe may bee compared. Euery way it ſetteth foorth the comelynes and beauty of the Spouſe, and therfore not

much materiall which ſence wee follow. Well, the Bride-groome hauing thus praiſed the beauty and comlynes of his ſpouſe by ſeuerall partes: Now hee doth breake foorth into an admiration, and great wonderment at her beautie in the whole, or in all layde together, ſaying: *How faire art thou, and how pleaſant art thou, O my loue in pleaſures?* This is brought in vppon all thoſe former particulars: and therfore the words do ſtand thus for the ſence: *O loue*, or, *O my loue how faire art thou, and how pleaſant art thou in euery reſpect*, or *in all partes*, or rather, *in all theſe heaped vp in one?* For, as you ſee, hee hath gone by particulars, from the foote to the head. Firſt, *How beautifull are thy goings with ſhooes, O Princes daughter?* Then, *the ioynts of thy thighes are as iewells, the worke of the handes of a cunning workman.* After this, hee ſpeaketh of the nauell, which he likeneth vnto a round cup, that wanteth not liquor. Alſo her belly is compared to an heape of wheat, compaſſed about with lyllies. Her two breaſts are as two young Roes that are twinnes. And ſo he aſcendeth, and ſaith: Her necke is as a tower of yuorie: her eyes as the fiſh pooles of Heſhbon, by the gate of Bath-

rabbim.

rabbim. Her noſe as the tower of Lebanon, that looketh towards Damaſcus: her head like skarlet, and her hayre, like the purple of a King hanged in the galleryes. In ſumme her beautie is wonderfull in all parts: ſhe is comely throughout. We ſee beauty and comlines in men and women oftentimes, but not in all parts alike: for ſometime a beautifull, a comely, and pleaſant face, but not ſo comely a bodie. Or a comely bodie, but not ſo well-fauoured a face. Or if face and body be comely, yet ſome defect in one part or other. This is not ſo in the Church of Chriſt: For, ſhee in euery part is beautyfull, delectable, and full of glorie.

Moreouer, that Chriſt doth ſpeake of her beautie in way of wonderment, it is from the heaping vp of all thoſe particulars together (as I ſaid) in one. For where there be many goodly things, and euery one by it ſelfe to be wondered at for beautie, how much may they be wondred at, when they come all together to be heaped vp in one? Take it thus, the Lord doth beſtow many goodly things vpon his Church, he dooth decke her with many rich Ornaments, euery one of theſe is to bee wondered at

for excellencie, thē how much more when they come altogether? But heere is another circumstance that dooth augment the matter: and that is from the person of him that hath her beautie in admiration. It is the Lord *IESVS* who doth wonder at her beautie: he cānot wonder at a mean thing. Lay all the glorie of Kings before him, and it is but drosse, he cannot wonder thereat: for what is it to the glorie which hee doth inherite and dwell in? What is the glory and beautie of the Sunne, the Moone, and the Starres vnto him? Doth hee wonder at them? Surely he wondreth at the beautie of his Church; how excellent then is her beauty and glory? They be rare things that Princes vppon Earth doe wonder at: most rare which the King of Kings hath in admiration. Oh ten times happy are they, which shalbe partakers of so great glorie! But may some men say, where is that companie in the world which is so goodly to behold? We see in all Churches that basenes and simplicitie which the world despiseth. We see also many deformities, and spots of sinne in the best. In a word, wee can see no matter of wonder, vnlesse it be this, that wee may wonder how Christ

should

ſhould deeme her ſo beautifull? I do anſwer vnto this, that men are blinde in diſcerning the beauty and excellencie of ſpirituall ornaments. Alſo they bee malignant, and for ſome deformities deſpiſe and depraue very excellent thinges. Yea but Chriſt ſpeaketh as if all were beautifull. That in reſpect of the full beautie & glorie which he will put vpon his ſpouſe. For herein the Lord beholdeth her, as hee will make her to himſelfe a glorious Church, not hauing ſpot or wrinckle. There is in the *Faithfull* that which is beautifull and pleaſant in the Eyes of the Lord, euen the manifold gifts and graces of his Spirit: but the beauty which he ſo highly comendeth and wondereth at, is rather in that which ſhe ſhall be, which he now beholdeth.

But what meaneth this, that hee dooth not only call her his loue, but his loue in pleaſurs, in delights, or in the things which we eſteeme as daintyes? Surely this doth much augmente the matter, this is a very forcible ſpeech to declare his exceeding affection towards her. We know men doe loue things, and take delight, but there be degrees in their loue: they may loue things very well, yet that is the higheſt when they

take their chiefe pleasure & delight in that which they loue. So Christ sheweth here that he taketh delight and pleasure in his faire Spouse, shee is euen a dearling and a dainty vnto him. They be much deceyued then, which suppose that Christ maketh but as it were a common account of his Church.

Then he addeth, *This, thy stature is like the Palmetree, and thy breasts like clusters.* The Palm-tree is of stature tall and straight, she is resembled therby. Also they say, that it is the nature of that tree, not to be prest downe with weight, but groweth vp the more: Surely the holy Spouse is not bowed downe, nor made crooked by wayght, and burden of afflictions. But wee shall see afterwardes how hee prosecuteth this comparison, in which hee doth liken her vnto the Palme tree, what a promise hee maketh vnto her, and what a blessing doth follow from the same.

And now that hee saith, *Her breasts are like clusters*, it is to be vnderstood (as it seemeth by the next verse) of the clusters of the Vine, a sweete and a wholsome Fruite, and so the breastes of the Church, by which shee nourisheth all her children, are

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repleniſhed with very ſweet milke.

We haue ſpoken of this before, what the breaſts are, and what that ſincere milk is, by which the Faithfull are nouriſhed. The truth is, that albeit the Teſtaments be the Lords, & not the word or doctrine of Man, yet they are thus farre become the breaſtes of the Church, that none can ſucke from them the wholſome nouriſhment, vnles he take them as her breaſts.

I meane thus: Some will ſay the Word is the Lordes, wee are not to reſpect men: And ſo they would ſeeme to haue the vſe and benefit of the Word of God, to giue them life, or nouriſh and feede them: But they deſpiſe the Church, they condemne her, and ſeparate themſelues from her. Theſe can haue no Saluation by the word of *GOD*, though they haue it in their handes, and reade it: for the Lorde hath made it the wholſome food of life, as it commeth out of the breaſtes of the holy Church.

Let vs then take heede, leaſt with Schiſmatikes, Heretikes, and Sectaries, wee ſeparate not our ſelues, from her that hath theſe breaſts, and which alone doth bring forth and nouriſh vp children to God.

Now

Now followeth a promiſe of the dreſſing this palme tree, and a declaration of the fruitfulneſſe that ſhall ſpring from the ſame dreſsing. The promiſe is in theſe wordes: *I haue ſaide I will goe vppe into the Palme tree, I will take hold of her boughes.* The declaration of the fruitfulneſſe is in theſe wordes: *and thy breaſts ſhall nowe be like the cluſters of the vine, and the ſauour of thy noſe like apples. And the roofe of thy mouth like good wine, which goeth ſtraight to my welbeloued, and cauſeth the lippes of the auncient to ſpeake.* Touching the former of theſe, that is the promiſe which Chriſt maketh of dreſſing his Church, the ſpeech is framed according to the maner of dreſſing the palme trees: for hauing compared her to a palme tree, he continueth the allegorie. The husbandmen when they did dreſſe and trim their palme trees, wēt vp into them, and ſo laide hold of euerie bough to dreſſe the ſame. According to this, the Lord ſaith here, *I haue ſaide*, that is, I haue decreed, I haue promiſed, and I will performe it, that I will go vppe into the Palme tree, and I will lay hold of her boughs. Which then you ſee, is as much as to ſay, I will dreſſe my palme tree. For

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the Lord doth beſtow all maner of dreſſing & trimming of his Church, to make her fruitfull. And this wanteth not effect: for hee declareth how fruitfull and how exceeding ſweet ſhee ſhall become by this dreſſing. Firſt hee ſaith, *her breſts ſhall be as cluſters of the vine.* Hee ſaide, that they were like cluſters before, and nowe they ſhall be more. It may be ſayd: how can that bee, are not her breaſts alwayes the ſame? is not the word of God in the Teſtaments alwaies one? it is alwaies one & the ſame: but the Church doth miniſter the word as it were out of her breaſts more aboundantly, and in more excellent maner then at another. Her breaſts then are alwaies like cluſters of the vine, there is in them a right holeſome & ſweete iuyce: but when the Lord powreth forth vpon her the greateſt meaſure of his ſpirit, then doth ſhe in moſt plenteous maner drawe forth her breaſts, and miniſter food vnto her children. The Church of Rome hath remoued away the ſincere milke of Gods worde from her children, bearing them in hand that it is no better then poiſon: and ſhe draweth forth other breaſts, which are full of the ſwill and dregs of her

her owne inuentions, and with the ſame ſhee doth nouriſh, or rather kill and murder. Let vs earneſtly craue of the Lord, that in theſe our dayes he will go vp into his palme tree, & lay hold on her boughs, that ſo her breaſts may bee as cluſters of grapes, yea that the heauenly doctrine may bee ſincerely and plenteouſly vttered. There bee many that holde the places of Paſtors, which be like drie nurſes. There bee that handle the worde ſo as it doth little good to the hearers.

Let vs proceed: he ſaith, *And the ſauour of thy noſe like apples.* Men doe vſually breath at their noſe: then this is to declare that the Church ſhall breath out nothing but ſweetnes. All that approach neer vnto her, ſhall ſmell the ſauour of her ſweete breath. Let vs well conſider of this, euen to trie our ſelues whether wee be of the Church: for many doe boaſt and brag that they bee true children of the Church, which yet breath out nothing but a ſtincking breath. Yea their breath is ſo lothſome to al that can ſmel, that it cannot be endured. Are theſe then of the Church? Is the ſauor of their noſe as the ſauour of apples?

Laſtly

Laſtly hee ſaith: *And the roofe of thy mouth like good wine, &c.* The roofe of the mouth is here put for that which proceedeth out of the mouth. And if any ſhall demaunde, What is that which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Church? I anſwer, it is the holy word & doctrine of the Lord, which ſhe doth profeſſe, and publiſh. This liuely word is here likened vnto good wine, which is deſcribed in the latter part of the verſe, by the property, and by the effect. Our Engliſh tranſlation for the one ſayth, *It goeth ſtraight to my welbeloued*: and for the other, that *it cauſeth the lips of the auncient to ſpeake*: The words ſtand thus, going to loues, to rightnes, which may rightly in the phraſe of our tongue be ſayde, mouing it ſelfe in moſt louely manner and moſt rightly: for ſo doth the mighty ſtrong wine moue it ſelfe when it is powred into the cup. And then for the latter clauſe, that it maketh to ſpeake the lips of the ancient. *Iaſhan* in the Hebrew doth ſignifie to ſleepe, and to wax olde. Hereupon ſome ſay, it cauſeth the ancient to ſpeake, Which is no ſmall effect, ſeeing men that are very olde haue their ſences dulled, and are very ſlow to ſpeake

ſpeake. The mighty wine doth moue & quicken the dull ſpirits, euen of the aged. Or as others do take it, that it cauſeth the lips of them that be aſleep to ſpeake, That is more, yea if we conſider it in the ſimilitude, it is hyperbolicall: but in the thing repreſented, that is the preaching of the Goſpell, it is moſt true. For thus it is, the word which proceedeth from the mouth of the Church is as ſtrong wine that moueth and quickeneth the dull ſpirits, not only as it were in men whoſe ſences are dulled with age, but euen in thoſe that be a ſleep, yea in a dead ſleep of ſinne. It rayſeth and quickeneth ſuch, it cauſeth their lips to ſpeake the prayſes of God, which before had no power that way. O beloued if wee bee not in a dead ſleep, yet to ſpeake holy things, to ſpeake to the prayſes of the Lord and edification of our brethrē wee are as olde men: let vs receiue this ſtrong wine from the mouth of the Church which may quicken our ſpirits

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THE

The thirteenth Sermon.

CHAP. VII. & VIII.

10. *I am my welbeloueds, and his desire is towards mee.*

11. *Come my welbeloued, let vs goe foorth into the Field, let vs remaine in the villages.*

12. *Let vs get vp early to the Vines, let vs see if the vine flourish, whether it hath budded the small Grape, whether the Pome-granates flourish, there will I giue thee my loue.*

13. *The mandrakes haue giuen a smell, and in our gates are all sweete things new and old: my Welbeloued I haue kept them for thee.*

1. *Oh that thou werest as my Brother, that sucked the breasts of my Mother: I would finde thee without, I would kisse thee, then they should not despise mee.*

2. *I will leade thee, and bring thee into my Mo-*

Mothers house: there shalt thou teach me: I will cause thee to drinke spiced wine, and newe wine of the Pome-granate.

3. *His left hand shall be vnder mine head, and his right hand shall embrace mee.*

4. *I charge you, O Daughters of Ierusalem, that you styrre not vp, nor wake not my Loue, vntill shee please.*

WE haue heard the great praise & commendation which Christ giueth to his Spouse, first to comfort her, by letting her vnderstād for certainty, that the blot of her offence was vtterly taken away, her comlynes and beautie was no lesse in his Eyes then before: & secondly, that it may appeare what a glorious thing in the sight of God, true repentāce is. Moreouer in the last place, we haue seene the promise of the Lord, what hee would do for his church, & how fruitfull, sweet, & precious she should becom therby Now the *Church* answereth, expressing at large her affection & duty towards *Christ*: that seeing his kindnes had been so great

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towards her, she doth euen as it were dedicate, vow, and consecrate her selfe, and all that she hath vnto him, hasting in desire, & longing for the day of the marriage. Here is no more alteration in the Church: but as the Song began, with her great desires of Christ, so it endeth. For, howsoeuer the faithfull doe slippe and fall, swarue, and go astray for a time, yet they rise againe, they returne into the right way.

But let vs come to her words, *I am my wel-beloued, and his affection is towards mee.* The coniunction may more rightly be taken thus, seeing or because his affection is towards mee. For in the former clause of the sentence she prrofesseth & voweth her selfe and all that she hath wholly to Christ, saying, *I am my welbeloueds*: and in the other clause shee rendreth a reason, saying, *because his affection is towards me.* His kindnes then towards her wrought this effect, that she and all hers shalbe dedicated vnto him. The cause goeth before the effect, and therfore let vs first speake of that. For the summe of her speech commeth to this much in effect: seeing my Spouse hath set his affection so vppon me, and frely loued me, when I was vtterly turned away from

him, when I was his enemie. Rom: 5. When I was dead in sinnes and trespasses. Ephes. 2. When I had nothing in me but that which was vncleane and abhominable, Rom: 3. Moreouer, seeing his affection towards me is so constant, that hauing Redeemed me, called, and sanctified mee with his Spirite, garnishing and decking me with his heauenly gifts and graces, and I shewing my selfe vnkinde, and very vndutifull towards him, defiling and deforming my selfe, yet his loue continueth one, hee doth forgiue me, he doth imbrace me, he doth account me as faire and precious, as if I had neuer sinned against him: Is there not great cause that I should wholly be his? No man cā denie the reason of this. Such aboundant Loue dooth craue loue againe. And now consider what it is, when she sayth, *I am my welbeloueds*. For though it be set first, yet it dependeth (as I sayde) vpon the latter. If shee be his, then is she not her owne. Shee is not to liue to herselfe, or to the Flesh, but vnto *CHRIST*. This is it that Saint *Peter* sayth, *That henceforth we should not liue after the lusts of men, but after the will of God.* 1. Pet: 4. vers. 2. This is when the faithfull do loue, obey & ho-

honour the Lord, for if they doe not loue him, how are they his? If they do not obey him, how doe they loue him? This saieth Saint *Iohn, is the loue of God, if wee keepe his commaundements.* 1. Iohn, 5. And if men breake the commandements, and liue in euill vices, how doe they honour the Lorde? You see therefore how the Church sayth, *I am my Wel-beloueds:* The whole-man, both Bodie and Soule is consecrated vnto Christ.

Here wee may see plainely, that such as walke in wickednesse, neuer feele the louing kindnes of the Lord. They haue not the true and liuely Faith. For this is Faith, when the Soule feeleth assuredly, that Christ hath set his affection vpon her, hee hath Redeemed and sanctified her, he wipeth away all her spots, and healeth all her infirmities. Though shee offend, yet his loue and kindnesse dooth remaine.

Now from the feeling of this, it cannot be, but the soule is euen rauished with loue towards him, and giueth vp herselfe to do that which may delight and please him. So that (as I saide) such as leade a wicked life, neuer felt the loue and kindnes of the Lorde, they neuer had the true and liuely

Faith. Beloued, if any man bee desirous to be Christs, (that is to say) if he wil loue, obey, and honour him: if he will not liue to himselfe but to the Lord: heere is the head and the fountaine, when shee sayeth, *I am my Wel-beloueds, because his affection is towardes mee:* Let him first apprehend the loue & affectiō of Christ. For, that loue of *CHRIST* (as Saint *Paule* speaketh) will constraine him to loue againe. And before a man do feele that *GOD* hath loued him, hee may as it were force himselfe to speake and doe good things, but they can not be acceptable: for they doe not proceede from a franke and free heart, they spring not from loue.

What is it, when a man eyther of a seruile feare, or from some siniſter respect, dooth abstaine from that which is euill, if his heart within doe loue and delight in it? Or what good dooth hee, which outwardly with his handes performeth some good deedes, which his heart delighteth not in? And now behold how forward and readie the Bryde is, to performe her dutie, and to haue the day of the marriage approach. She is not the woman that shee before was in the fifth Chapter, where

where ſhee made excuſes, and would not ariſe to open to Chriſt: for now ſhee calleth vnto him, ſaying, *Come my welbeloued let vs goe forth into the field, let vs lodge in the villages*, or as it may be tranſlated, at the Cyprus trees. The Lord did promiſe in the former Chapter, that he would goe vp into the palme tree, and take holde of her boughes, he would dreſſe his Church, and ſhee ſhould thereupon become moſt flouriſhing, fruitful and delectable, vnto this ſhee offereth her ſeruice. It is vnto this for it could bee no prayſe in her to moue him vnto any thing which hee had not promiſed. She doth not name the palme tree, but Cyprus trees, and the vines: but the matter is all one, ſeeing the Church is reſembled by the one, as well as by the other.

Then thus it is, the Lord promiſeth to dreſſe and trim his Church, ſhee offereth her ſelfe moſt cheerefull and willing thervnto. He will beſtow his rich graces and giftsvpon her, and ſhe is euen on thirſt for them. It becommeth all the faithfull, whē the Lord promiſeth his graces & heauenbleſſings to ſhew themſelues forward, and readie to receyue them, and to put to all

their care and diligence, that their hearts may be ſanctified and purged, that ſo they may be fit to bring foorth ſweet fruites. The Lorde dooth call them to ariſe from the delight of theſe Earthly things, and to ſet their affections on things that be aboue: ſo the Bryde here offereth herſelfe to goe forth into the Fieldes, and euen to lodge among the *Cyprus*-trees, that ſhee may riſe vp early in the morning, to goe to the Vines. She is now ſo rapt with the loue and deſire of Heauenly thinges, that her minde and her affections are carryed out of the world, ſhe will now euen lodge in a continual meditation and delight of them, yea, ſhe will daily raiſe vp herſelfe early to behold the fruit that doth ſpring frō them. This is a maruellous good eſtate and right commendable, that ſhe is now in. Before this, ſhe was layde downe on ſleepe in her bed, ſhee was loath to be rayſed vp.

Behold here the difference of the godly after their afflictions, from that they were when worldly eaſe and proſperitie had taken hold on them. Then the gifts of the ſpirite lye as it were buryed, and all groweth euen as it were ruſtie: but when the fiery tryall commeth, when they be caſt as gold

Gold into the furnace, the droſſe is burned out, they ſhine bright, they be raiſed vp and quickned. Theſe things (I ſay) wee may beholde in her forwardnes, ouer that ſhee was in the fift chapter. This may teach vs to feare our ſelues in our long proſperitie that we haue enioied here in this our land. We haue had it ſo long, that we do ſcarce thinke of afflictions: and greatly it is to be deſired that ſuch Peace might ſtil cõtinue, ſo it might not be to our great harm. But hath not our proſperitie euen drawne the hearts of the moſt which profeſſe the Goſpell, into carnall ſecuritie? Do we now ſay) as the Bride here) *Come my wel-beloued, let vs goe out into the field, let vs lodge among the Cyprus-trees, let vs riſe vppe early to the Vines: let vs ſee if the vine flouriſh, &c.* Are we thus ready and forwards vnto the ſearch and imbracing of ſpirituall and heauenly graces? Are we ſo delighted with thē as to make them our meditation, night and day, & ſo euen as it were to lodge in them? Are our affections ſo fixed & ſet, that wee doe euen ioy to behold the fruits of righteouſnes: Nay rather, is not euery man almoſt fallen on ſleepe, and doth not the minde euen lodge in the deſires of theſe

earthly things. Is not the whole care and ſtudy how to heape vp gold & ſiluer, how to get Lands and poſſeſſions: Shall the Lord let vs alone in this eſtate? Whether will we fall: whether will we runne? how great is the complaint that is daily vttered euery where, againſt the couetouſneſſe of thoſe that ſhould be lights & guydes vnto others? The Lord calleth and knocketh daily, to haue vs open vnto him. And if we account it a good thing to enioy ſtill our worldly peace and proſperitie: Let vs cheerfully and wilingly riſe vp; let vs offer our ſelues to goe into the Fieldes, and to lodge among the ſweete thinges.

Doubtles there is great hope, if we raiſe vp our mindes to doe as the holie Spouſe here dooth, wee ſhall enioy ſtill all good things. If not, wee ſhall haue ſome great afflictions to rayſe vs vp: For the Lord will not ſuffer his Church to goe to vtter ruine. It is beſt for vs (if we could wiſely conſider of it) and moſt for our eaſe, to do that which the ſpouſe doth here, before affliction come: for then we ſhall preuent it, and turne it away. And now beholde, how ſhe doth proceed in this matter, longing for the day of the Marriage. *Let vs*

riſe

riſe vp early to the Vines, Let vs ſee if the Vine Flouriſh, whether it hath budded the ſmall grapes? there will I giue thee my loue.

The flouriſhing of the Vine, budding of the ſmall grape, and likewiſe of the Pomegranates, are the fruits of the graces of God in the aſſemblyes, and the ſignes of the approaching of the Marriage day. The gifts and graces of the holie Ghoſt ſhould bee powred forth in vaine, if theſe ſweet fruits ſhould not therevpon bud and flouriſh.

And when theſe thinges are, or with theſe things, the Bride ſaith, ſhee will giue her loue to Chriſt. Shee will giue vp her ſelfe to loue him, yea euen perfectly when the day of the Marriage commeth.

The Faithfull do now loue the Lord Ieſus, ſome with greater loue, ſom with leſſe, according to the meaſure of their Faith. For look how much more firmely and aſſuredly a man feeleth the loue of God towardshim, ſo much more feruētly doth he loue God. And ſo the Bride ſpeaketh here of an increaſe of her loue: As his graces abound towards her, and the fruites thereof more increaſe, ſo her loue ſhall more increaſe, and eſpecially at the time when ſhe ſhall be fully vnited vnto him.

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In the next verſe ſhee mentioneth her fruites, and that ſhe reſerueth them wholly to Chriſt her wel-beloued. The *Mandrakes haue ginen their ſmell*, (ſaith ſhee) or as ſome do take the word more generally, for all amiable flowers, ſuch as be faire and louely: For the Church is as a garden of ſweete flowers.

Moreouer, ſhee mentioneth the plentie of good fruites, both newe and olde, which bee within her gates, and that ſhee hath reſerued and kept them only for him. Theſe are moſt commendable things that ſhe ſpeaketh of: firſt, that ſhe doth ſo flouriſh and abound in ſweete things, which are all holy vertues and fruits of Faith, and ſecondly, that ſhee keepeth them for her Lorde. For the true Spouſe is chaſte and faithfull vnto Chriſt: ſhe truſteth in him alone, ſhee runneth not a whoring after falſe Gods: but ſhe worſhippeth and honoureth her Lord with all the fruits of her Faith: *My loue* (ſaith ſhee) *I haue kept them for thee.*

The Church in this place differeth much from that which the Lord complaineth of in the fift chapter of the Prophet Eſay, for there he ſheweth what he did for his vine-

yard,

yard, and when he looked it ſhould bring forth good grapes, it brought forth ſtincking grapes. The generall eſtate of our Church in this Land is liker to that in the Prophet, then to this heere ſpoken of.

The ſtincking-Grapes hang amongſt vs in great cluſters, very plenteouſly euery where: For what vices doo not abound? but the amiable Flowers, and the ſweete Fruites both new and olde how ſcarce are they? Let vs aſſure our ſelues, that if wee be not of the number of thoſe which bring forth ſweet fruites vnto Chriſt, it ſhall not auaile vs, that wee haue place for a time in the viſible Church, and be named and reputed Chriſtians. Thou art a branche of the Vine: but as it is written, or as Chriſt ſaith, *Euery branche in mee that beareth not good fruite, he taketh away.* Iohn 15.

The Lorde of his infinite goodnes and mercie, looke vppon this Realme, and ſo dreſſe this Vine, that it may flouriſh, and bring foorth good Fruite, and in more plentifull manner then hetherto, leaſt the Kingdome of God be taken from vs, and giuen to a Nation, that will bring foorth the Fruits thereof.

She proceedeth on forwards in the next chap-

chapter, declaring what a great deſire ſhee hath to be in his preſence, and to retaine him with her, which ariſeth from a vehement loue, whoſe heat cannot be quenched, as ſhee afterwards expreſſeth.

They that be of one familie, as Brothers and ſiſters, do dwell together in familiaritie, each doth vſually know where to find other. According to this ſhe ſaith: *Oh that thou wereſt as my Brother, that ſucked the breaſts of my Mother, I would finde thee without, I would kiſſe thee, then they ſhould not diſpleaſe mee.*

The time will come when ſhe ſhall indeede dwell with him, as brothers and ſiſters do dwell together, when there ſhal be moſt neere familiaritie, when ſhe ſhall find him, and imbrace him, and for this time, ſhe doth wiſh. Indeed ſhe hath great cauſe to wiſh that ſhe might once come to dwell with him: for the fulnes of her ioy and felicitie conſiſteth therein.

He doth not now indeed leaue her comfortles, while ſhe is vpon Earth, but giueth her the comfortable ſignes of his preſence, and at ſome times more then other, but ſhe lyeth ſubiect vnto many reproches, contumelyes, and proud ſcornings of the wicked

ked & vngodly men of this world. Therfore she sayth, *also they shall not despise me.* The glorie of the whole Church shalbe so great that her proudest enemyes shall not despise her, but wonder at her. The faithfull are now the children of God, but as S. Iohn sayeth, *it dooth not appeare what they shall be,* 1. Iohn. 3.

An easie thing it is now to contemne and despise the most godly that liue vpon the earh: For the blind world cānot iudge but according to outward appearance. And so becauſe they see not in them outward glorie, they raile on them, they reproach them, they account them euen as abiectes, and most contemptible. But, when they shall appeare with Christ in glorie, their glorie shall bee so great that none shall despise them.

The diuels and all the damned cannot but be tormented with enuie, at the beholding of the glorious estate of *Gods chosen,* whom they had in derision, and the ende of whose life those reprobate men accounted foolishnes, the diuell hardening their harts & blinding the eies of their mindes: but despise them any longer they cannot. Here is a good comfort for such as dwel among

mong ſcoffers, ſcorners, and deriders of religion. Let them ſcoffe and deride for a time at ſuch as ſtudie to pleaſe God: the time will come, when all baſenes and all infirmities beeing remoued, they ſhall behold them in another eſtate, in which they ſhall not deſpiſe them.

After ſhee hath expreſſed her wiſh, and what benefit ſhe ſhall receyue thereby, ſhe ſheweth what dutie ſhee for her parte will performe vnto him. For, a very vnreaſonable thing it were, that the Church receiuing ſo great benefites by Chriſt, ſhould not render ſome dutyes of thankfulneſſe vnto him. And therefore ſhe ſaith, *I will leade thee, & bring thee into my mothers houſe.*

Ieruſalem from aboue is the Mother of all, the Church at any time vppon Earth is her daughter. The houſe of this her Mother, then in this place, ſeemeth to bee the Heauens, into which the Church ſhall accompanie the Lord. For, ſhe ſhall neuer dwell together with him, in that familiar ſorte which ſhee ſpake of, vntill ſhe come there. The next clauſe ſtandeth doubtfull, whether wee ſhall tranſlate it, thou ſhalt teach mee, or ſhee ſhall teach mee? For, in the Hebrew Tongue in the Future

ture, the ſame word ſtandeth for the third perſon Feminine, that is, for the ſecond Maſculine. And ſo I ſay, it ſtandeth indifferent here by the word, whether we ſay, thou ſhalt teach me, or ſhee ſhall teach me. True it is, that the Lord *IESVS* is in a double reſpect, the onely Teacher, and that is thus: that onely his doctrine is to bee taught, and hee alone lighteneth with his ſpirite. But the vniuerſall Church, as the mother of all particular Churches, dooth as an inſtrument vnder Chriſt, teach and inſtruct with the ſame Heauenly doctrine. And ſo we may take it here that ſhe ſayth vnto Chriſt, thou ſhalt teach mee (which I take to be the righter, if wee take it here to bee ſpoken of the time when the Church ſhall dwell with Chriſt in the Heauens: For then there ſhall be no more teaching by men) or that ſhe ſaith, her Mother ſhall teach her, or hath taught her, if one tenſe may be vſed for another. But what is that ſhe is to be taught? Euen how ſhe ought, or how ſhe may rightly performe her dutie towards Chriſt, and that is ſet forth in the next wordes, *I will cauſe thee to drinke ſpiced-wine, or wine of the Pome-granates.*

According to the ſimilitude in Earthly things,

with a daintie Banquet, in her Mothers houſe. For, that is meante by the ſpiced wine, and wine of the Pome granates. The ſpirituall things thereby ſignified, are the praiſes by which ſhe will magnifie and ſet forth his glory. The Lord hath no need of any creatures to ſet forth his glory and praiſe: for hee hath all fullnes of ioy and happineſſe in himſelfe: but it is his holie will that his creatures ſhall be partakers of his glorie, and that they ſhall ſet foorth his praiſe, and the ſame praiſing of him is moſt acceptable & delightſom vnto him, which the Bryde expreſſeth here by ſpiced wine, and by the iuyce of the Pome-granates. This may encourage vs to bee moſt readie and forwards in glorifying the Lorde, ſeeing it is ſo delightſome and pleaſing in his ſight. If our obedience, our thankes, our praiſe, our glorifying God, bee as ſpiced wine vnto him, what wretches are wee, if we cannnt thereby be moued vnto thoſe holy dutyes?

The two next verſes we haue had before: the one, how Chriſt dooth embrace his Church, ſupport, comfort, and vphold her with both hãds. She doth reſt in his armes: For, as ſhe ſayeth, *His left hand is vnder my head,*

head, and with his right hand hee doth embrace me. Were it not for this, the Spouse could neuer endure heere in the worlde. This is our comfort, that the Lord Iesus doth thus, as it were, with both hands, or both his armes vphold and comfort his chose. The other verse is a charge, that she layeth vpon the daughters of *Ierusalem*, that they doe not stirre vp, nor wake her loue vntill hee please. There bee some words omitted of the forme of the charge giuen before, but the matter is all one. She doth very seriously enioyne her companions or daughters to behaue themselues so reuerently and soberly in the presence of this most glorious Bridegroome, that no cause be offered vnto him of displeasure, by which he might take occasion to depart. When our Lord Iesus sheweth himselfe most present with his people, by euident tokens of his graces and heavenly gifts: such is the vnreuerent wantonnesse of some, that they doe not consider in whose presence they be. They bee in the Assemblies, as it were in the Alehouse, or in an Inne: so little they regard the presence of Christ or holy things. God grant that we may regard this charge laid vpon vs.

The foureteenth Sermon.

CHAP. VIII.

5 Who is this that commeth vp out of the wilderneſſe leaning vpon her welbeloued? I rayſed thee vp vnder an appletree, there thy mother conceyued thee, there ſhe conceyued that bare thee.

6 Set me as a ſeale on thine heart, and as a Signet vpon thine arme, for loue is as ſtrong as death iealouſie is as cruell as the graue: the coales thereof are fiery coales, and a vehement flame.

7 Much water cannot quench loue, neyther can the floudes drowne it. If a man ſhould giue all the ſubſtance of his houſe for loue, they would greatly contemne it.

WE haue had in this ſong the ſtate of the Church here vpon earth, variable after diuers ſorts: as euē now calling and crying out for her welbeloued: not long after wee haue her, as it were ſet downe, and the bridegroome calling vpon her to ariſe and come away: yea ſometime ſhe is not onely ſet downe, but

but alſo ſhee is laid downe and a ſleepe,& vnmindfull of her duty. The godly doth not continue alwayes alike: but this wee muſt know, that howſoeuer they ſwarue for a time,yet they returne, and their end is commendable. And therfore the church here euen to the end of this ſong continueth in faith,in zeale,and in performance of all good duties. Here is no more ſwaruing,here is no dulnes or ſlackneſſe any more mentioned. This I ſay,may bee noted,that all and euery one of the true beleeuers,euen the choſen of God, ſtand to the end.

But let vs now come vnto the wordes that I haue read vnto you. Firſt in generall,the Bride doth declare her moſt ardent loue towards Chriſt in all theſe three verſes. As the words doe ſtand in our Engliſh tranſlation,it cannot be diſcerned who vttreth this ſentence,*Who is this that aſcendeth vp out of the wilderneſſe, leaning vpon her welbeloued? I rayſed thee vp vnder an apple tree,&c.* For there is nothing by the ſpeech to hinder, but that the Bridegroome may ſpeake it touching his bride, that he ſtirred her vp vnder an apple tree. Alſo it may ſeeme to be the ſpeech of ſom

other, and leaſt of all it ſeemeth to be the ſpeech of the bride: but the Hebrew text doth make it moſt cleare, and out of all doubt and controuerſie, that it is the bride which ſpeaketh, becauſe this clauſe, *I rayſed thee vp, &c.* and alſo this, *Thy mother conceiued thee*, are ſpoken in the maſculine gender, as to a man, and not as vnto a woman. In her firſt words then ſhe ſetteth forth the vehemency of her loue, as it were by a compariſon, ſaying, *Who is ſhe?* (for ſo the words are) that *commeth vp, &c.* As if ſhee ſhould ſay, where is ſhee to be found that hath ſhewed the like loue to her welbeloued, that I haue ſhewed vnto mine? Where is there any Bride that hath by ſuch effects declared her loue to her Bridegroome, as I haue to mine? That hath taken ſuch trauell, and endured ſo many afflictions, paſſed through ſo great perils to come to her ſpouſe, as I haue vnto mine? What then will ſome man ſay, is this the humility of the Church? Dooth ſhe now glory and boaſt what ſhee doth for Chriſt? This her boſting is not in her ſelfe, or in her own merites, or in any vpbraiding manner, what ſhe had done for Chrtſt: it is not contrary vnto humilitie:

For

For the faithfull when they haue beene very feruent In loue and zeale towardes Christ,and haue endured great things for his sake,may to their comfort, both remember,and euen mention to the Lord, what they haue endured and gone thorough for his sake.For withall they do acknowledge,and that vnfainedly,that they haue beene enabled and made fit therunto by his grace,and so their glorying is not in themselues but in the Lord.Moreouer,when we can rightly call to minde, and mention what hard things wee haue willingly endured for the loue of Christ: it boldneth vs to make request vnto him, For this matter reade the last Chapter of Nehemiah,where you shall find,how hee reckoneth vp what,& what he had done: and then prayeth to the Lord to remember him therein,& in v.22.he craueth that he would pardō him acording to his great metcy,whereby it appeareth that *Nehemiah* did not mention his well doing, as it were, to stand in his own deserts,for why then should he pray the Lord to pardon him,according to his great mercy: Euen so the Bride here,mentioning what shee hath done for Christ, doth not glory in her selfe.

Now marke with what ſpeech ſhee vttereth the effects of her loue. *Who is ſhe that commeth out of the wilderneſſe, leaning vpon her welbeloued,* or as the word may be expounded, accompanynig her welbeloued Who is ſhee that to finde her welbeloued and to be in his company, hath aſcended out of the wilderneſſe? All the difficulty of the word, which declareth her moſt vehement loue, is, in aſcending for his ſake out of the wilderneſſe: What is then this wilderneſſe? It is the world and all worldly deſires.

Is that may ſome man ſay ſuch a great matter, that ſhee aſcendeth out of the World to ſeeke Chriſt? yea, if you do well conſider what it includeth in it, you will confeſſe that ſhee may well demand who is ſhee that hath euer done the like? you know what our Sauiour ſayeth, that *except a man deny himſelfe, except he forſake father and mother, wife and children, houſes, and lands, yea and his life, and take vp his croſſe and follow him, he cannot be his Diſciple.*

All this is heere included in this one ſpeech of the Bride, when ſhee ſaieth, *that aſcendeth out of the Wilderneſſe.* Hee that aſ-

aſcendeth out of the wilderneſſe, denyeth himſelfe for the loue hee beareth to Chriſt, he mortifieth and ſubdueth all the ſinnefull luſts of the fleſh, hee renounceth the delights and pleaſures of ſinne, which are ſo ſweet vnto the naturall man. And rather then hee will deny the truth of Chriſt, he will loſe and forſake all things that are the deereſt vnto him in the world yea euen life it ſelfe, although it be with al exquiſite torments. We may ſee then that this is no ſmall thing, that ſhe aſcendeth vp out of the wilderneſſe. They that for the loue of Chriſt forſake carnall pleaſurs mortifie the luſtes of the fleſh, forgoe worldly commodities, endure all repro, ches and bitter perſecutions euen vnto death, aſcend vp out of the wilderneſſe, for to aſſociate themſelues to Chriſt: and it is a wonderfull vehement loue that carrieth them ſo farre. Shee may well ſay then, who is ſhe that aſcendeth vp out of the wildernes accompanying her welbeloued? For what Bride is there that hath for her welbeloued, or to accompany her welbeloued, endured ſuch things? Let vs marke well the ſpeech of the Church in this place, becauſe there be

many which profes to loue Christ, which yet doe not ioyne themselues in societie with him to ascend vp out of the wildernesse. They professe the Gospell, but yet they take all delights and pleasures of the flesh that they can: they liue euen as other men here in their worldly course do liue: surely, these are not like the bride.

The other part of her speech is harder, when shee saieth, *I raysed thee vp vnder an apple tree, there thy mother conceyued thee, there she, &c.* First, we must obserue, that the Bride speaketh as a Spouse that had sought vp her welbeloued, and found him resting vnder an appletree: she raiseth him vp to go with him into the heauenly places: for thither in heart and affection doe the godly, euen while they liue heere, ascend vp with Christ, when they haue sought and found him. That shee sayth vnder an apple tree, wee must vnderstand that the Apple tree of olde time hath been dedicate to loue. So that in this wee may consider the loue in which Christ resteth towards his church: for were it not for that vnchangeable loue which he beareth

to

towardes her, how ſhoulde ſhee finde him, or where ſhould ſhee finde him? Shee vſed another ſpeech before in this ſong, and ſayde that loue was his Banner ouer her.

By his loue ſhe is drawne vnto him, euen as the Souldiers doe aſſemble vnder their Banner or Enſigne when it is ſpread. She here rayſeth him vp vnder an apple tree: all is to bee referred vnto his great loue, by that ſhee is drawne vnto him, by that ſhe findeth him, and by that his Loue ſo abounding, is her loue towardes him kindled and enflamed. Alſo vnder this Apple tree, the mother of this bridegroome did conceiue him. But who is that mother of Chriſt that conceyued him in this loue, or through this his loue? Surely her mother is Chriſts mother: for ſhe is not onely the Spouſe of Chriſt, but as he ſayeth, *My ſiſter, my ſpouſe.* Shee her ſelfe alſo then is the mother of *Chriſt*, for the church, euen all the faithfull doe through faith, trauell with *Chriſt*. That one place, Reuelar. 12. doth ſufficiently teach vs this point, where the auncient church of the Iewes, doth trauell with CHRIST

and

and bring him forth. The promiſes were made of olde, that he ſhould come, and be borne of a woman, the choſen did beleeue it, and expect it, vnto their faith hee is born, yea their faith doth euen as it were trauell and bring him forth. So the church is the mother of Chriſt, and Chriſt in the Goſpell calleth his Diſciples his mother, his brethren and ſiſters: and euery faithfull ſoule doth through faith conceyue Chriſt, and the whole Church doth now trauell with child, to bring him forth in his ſecond comming, as the auncient church at his firſt comming. All this faith apprehendeth his loue, and therefore is ſayde here to bee vnder an apple tree: Theſe things are very myſticall, and it doth ſtand vs vpon, if we will bee the true children of the Church, to looke well vnto them. I meane, that we come to feele the loue of Chriſt, and therby to conceiue him. For if Chriſt dwell not in vs, wee haue no part in him: and therefore here is mention of conceyuing and bringing him forth. What is more glorious then to be euen as the mother of Chriſt? And the ſame is euery faithfull ſoule. This ought greatly to ſtirre vp our minds to ſeeke the ho-

holy faith. Thus farre you haue ſeen how ſhee hath ſet forth and declared her moſt vehement loue, by aſcending vp with him out of the wilderneſſe.

Such a thing as the like is not done by any Spouſe vnto her welbeloued. Alſo we ſee that this her exceeding loue hath bin kindled and enflamed by his loue. And now in the next verſe her loue breaketh forth into a vehement prayer, that ſhee may be ioyned moſt neerely vnto him, & that hee will alwayes haue her in minde, rendring a reaſon, that the vehemencie and ſtrength of her loue is ſuch as by no meanes it can be ouercome: This is ſet forth by compariſons in this verſe, and in the next verſe following.

Firſt, ſhe requeſteth that hee will ſet her as a ſeale vpon his heart: a ſeale in a ring of golde was euer made much account of as a precious thing: ſhee requeſteth that ſhee may be ſo eſteemed of him, and that he will ſet her euen vpon his heart. That which is in the heart of a man, is neereſt vnto him, that he mindeth, that hee loueth, that is deere and precious vnto him.

She doth alſo deſire to bee ſet as a ſeale

vpon

vpon his arm, that is, as a jewell, alwayes in ſight: ſo that now we may ſee the ſumme of her requeſt. She doth in the vehemeucie of her loue, deſire to be deere, and precious in the eyes of him whom ſhe loueth, and to be moſt neerly ioyned vnto him as a precious jewell, both in his hart, and vpon his hand, ſo that he may alwayes minde her, and haue her in his ſight: for, wee know that whatſoeuer a man loueth with the greateſt loue, that hee deſireth to be neere vnto, yea euen faſtened vnto it. What doe you ſee here in the Bride, how is her affection ſet? Shee doth ſo ſet her heart vpon *CHRIST* her *Wel-beloued*, ſhe dooth ſo deſire to bee alwayes with him, that ſhee vtterly contemneth all things in compariſon of him. What is the glorie and the pompe, the Riches, and Honours, & all the pleaſures of this world vnto her, more then vile droſſe? And now ſhee rendereth the ~~rendereth~~ the reaſon of her deſire, from the nature and force of Loue: for loue (ſaith ſhe) is ſtrong as death.

This is the firſt compariſon, whereby ſhee dooth expreſſe the force of her Loue, death is exceeding ſtrong: For if we conſider the great might of Princes, of Kings,

of

of Emperours, yea, of all the mightie Monarches in the world, death hath ſubdued, and caſt them downe.

Who hath beene ſo ſtrong as to reſiſt death? where hath that mightie man bin found, that could euer eſchew his ſtroke? Yea, if wee conſider from whence death hath his dominion, you ſhall perceyue the force therof to be ſuch, as that it cannot be vanquiſhed by any creature: the reward of ſinne is death. This is from the juſtice of the moſt high Iudge: vnleſſe ſinne be ſatisfied and aboliſhed, death cannot in any wiſe be vnderſtood.

Could all the Angells in Heauen aboliſh death? Nay, they could not ſatisfie the juſtice & the wrath of God for ſinne: and therfore they cannot ouercome death to deliuer men.

Onely the Almightie Sonne of *GOD*, *IESVS CHRIST*, God and Man, hath encountred hand to hand with this Enemie, hath taken away his ſting, and will at the laſt vtterly ſubdue him: So that hee ſhall bee quite ſwallowed vp in victorie, 1. Corinth: 15. Behold then the force and ſtrength of death, and ſee how ſhee compareth her loue with it,

Her

Her loue will not endure, (the force of it is ſuch) but that ſhee muſt bee neerely ioyned vnto her wel-beloued. I will not be ſayd nay, but that ſhee muſt be ſet as a ſeale, euen as a precious iewell vppon his heart, and vppon his arme. Where there is no loue, there is no ioyning vnto Chriſt: ther is no ſuch boldnes to come vnto him, but there is feare and horror.

Loue, as Saint Iohn dooth teach, in the fourth chapter of his firſt Epiſtle, caſteth out Feare: yea, (as he ſayth) *Perfect loue caſteth out all feare.* Then where loue is weake, the deſire to be ioined with Chriſt is weake, where it is ſtrong, there is a ſtronger deſire: and when it falleth that it be moſt vehement (as ſhe ſetteth it forth heere) then is there alſo the moſt earneſt longing to be euen in his heart, and in his hands, as a thing deere and precious vnto him. If this be the effect of loue, to deſire to be ſo neerly ioyned with the Lord, and the effect arguing the cauſe, dooth not our weake deſire to be ioined with Chriſt, argue the great weaknes of our loue? The loue of manie is ſtrong to the world, and that cauſeth them to deſire to be euen faſtned vnto it: Riches and honours are their

Wil-

Wel-beloued, other they know none.

The next clauſe is to the ſame effect, whē ſhe ſaith, *Iealouſie is cruell as the graue.* The wordes are, that jealouſie is hard as the graue: or as we may call it zeale. We take jealouſie betweene marryed partyes, where the one hath the other in ſuſpition, that their loue is deriued vnto ſome other. The Bride heere by zeale of jealouſie vnderſtandeth the vehement affection of loue, in which ſhee deſireth that his affection may alſo bee continued towards her. And this ſhe ſayth is hard as the graue: wee know what power the graue hath, how harde it is, how inuincible: it deuoureth all men, it keepeth downe all men: For, who hath the ſtrength to come out of it? There haue beene ſome rayſed vp out of it by the power of God, and chiefly the Sonne of God himſelfe: who was buryed, and roſe againe, but what man hath had the power to raiſe vp himſelfe? To this force of the graue, ſhe compareth the heate and vehemencie of her loue: So that ſtill ſhee doth ſhew, that the greatnes of her loue will not ſuffer her, but that ſhe muſt needs couet to be joyned as a ſignet moſt neerly vnto him.

In

In the next clauſe ſhe ſayeth, *the coales thereof are fiery coales, and a vehement flame* It is manifeſt that ſhe compareth her loue vnto fire, both to the coales, and to the flame: but ſomewhat we are to note about the wordes.

Thus wee may tranſlate them: *The coales thereof are coales, the fire of the flame of God.* In the firſt part of this (the coales thereof are coales) the ſpeech is framed to ſhew that they bee exceeding hote coales, The later part is, to declare that the flame is a wonderfull great flame: for it is as ſhee ſayeth, The flame of God.

She ſetteth forth the greatneſſe of the effect, by the greatneſſe of the cauſe: for as God is greater then al, ſo are his works: ſo then this flame of God, is as much as to ſay a moſt vehement flame. This loue of the church towards Chriſt, is fitly compared vnto fire, yea vnto a vehement fire, where there be both hote burning coales and a great flame. for the ſpiritual loue is very hote. For where the ſoule feeleth the loue of Chriſt, it is euen ſet on fire with loue towards him, euen with ſo hote a loue as ſhee compareth it heere vnto the coales and flame of fire.

And

And marke well how the flame is the flame of God: This fire indeed is kindled in the hearts of the faithfull by the holy Ghoſt. If wee then will haue theſe coales, if we will haue the flame of God in vs, let vs craue inſtantly, and continually the heauenly fire of the lightning Spirit: then ſhall we boldly make our requeſt to be ſet as a ſignet vpon his heart, and as a ſeale vpon his arme, and it ſhall not be denyed vnto vs. For this wee are to aſſure our ſelues, that here is not a demaund, or a petition made, which ſhal be denyed vnto her.

Therefore let euery faithfull ſoule aſſure her ſelfe, that if the heat and flame of loue towards Chriſt be in her, that then ſhee is ioined neere vnto him, ſhe is as a precious Iewell ſet vpon his heart, and alſo vpon his hand. If our faith bee not ſuch, as that it doth kindle ſuch a burning loue of Chriſt in our hearts, let vs not deceiue our ſelues, it is not the true faith: wee may ſeeme to haue confidence or boldneſſe, but in the time of terror it will fayle vs. Meditate therefore beloued, dayly, euen with deepe and ſerious me-

ditation, how rich, how ſweete, and how precious the *LORD IESVS* is.

Call to minde what wonderfull Loue hee hath ſhewed towardes vs, what great bleſſings and benefites hee hath beſtowed vpon vs, that thereby (if it be poſſible) this Heauenly fire may be kindled: yea, ſo as that it may be euē a moſt vehement flame.

And now to the laſt verſe, in which he doth yet further declare the heate and force of her loue. Thus be her words: *Many waters cannot quench this loue: the Floudes cannot drowne it.* Herein ſhe doeth purpoſely in a moſt high ſorte expreſſe, that nothing can ouercome her loue: it is invincible. As it is written of the loue of Chriſt, that nothing can ſeparate his choſen from it: ſo here the Spouſe affirmeth, that her Loue towards him cannot be put out.

And this you muſt obſerue, that ſhee frameth her ſpeech according to her former compariſon, when ſhee ſayde: *The coales thereof are coales, and the fire of the flame of God.* For, what fire is there here, but manie waters will quench, at leaſt if Floods of waters doe ouer-flow it? But this

this Heauenly fire cannot bee quenched, the floods cannot put it out. The diuell dooth seeke to cast out all the waters hee can, for to extinguish it: yea, the Dragon dooth cast out a Flood out of his mouth, Reuel. 12. but all in vaine, for this Loue cannot be quenched.

Oh happie Spouse, that loueth her bridegroome with so strong a Loue. Shee can neuer be ouerthrowne: she can neuer be separated from him. We see some that for a brunt doe seeme to bee euen wholly set on fire with the loue of Christ, and after a while it is euen quenched and gone. Many of these there be in these dayes. Let vs beware, for hee that continueth to the ende shal be saued.

There is yet one clause, that she sayth: *If a man would giue all the substance of his house for loue, they would vtterly contemne it.* This loue cannot bee wonne away with any goods. The nature of many much addicted to loue riches, and the treasures of this world: ther is scarce any thing of such force to win the heart from Christ: but the Church here affirmeth, that if all treasures should be offred her to draw her loue from

Christ, she would vtterly contemn them. This is no smal commendation, considering as I sayde, how all men are inclined to loue earthly things. It is most certayne that many thousands which professe christianity, doe contrary to that which the holy virgine here professeth. Gold and siluer, houses and lands do so intice them that they let goe the loue of Christ. They doe sell their loue, yea, they euen sell their soules to the Diuell, for a little money. Much better it is that our loue to him be such, as that in respect thereof, wee account all things here below to be but dung and drosse. The Lord of his infinite mercy grant vs to bee thus affected,

Amen.

CHAP.

The fifteenth Sermon.

CHAP. VIII.

8 *Wee haue a little ſiſter, and ſhee hath no breaſts, what ſhall wee doe for our ſiſter when ſhee ſhall be ſpoken for?*

9 *If ſhee bee a wall, wee builde vpon her a ſiluer pallace, and if ſhe be a dore, we wil keepe her in with bordes of Cedar.*

10 *I am a wall, and my breaſts are as towers, then was I as one that found fauour in his eyes.*

11 *Salomon had a vine in Baal-Hamon: hee gaue the Vineyard vnto Keepers euerie one bringeth for the fruites thereof, a thouſand peeces of ſiluer.*

12 *But my Vineyard which is mine, is before me: to thee O Salomon belong the thouſand peeces of ſiluer, and two thouſand to them*

that keepe the fruite thereof.

13 *Oh thou that dwelleſt in the Gardens, thy companions hearken to thy voyce, cauſe me to heare it.*

14 *Oh my wel-beloued, flye away, and bee like vnto the Roe, or to the young Hart vppon the mountaines of ſpices.*

WEe are now come to the concluſion, and ſhutting vppe of this Song. Heere bee indeede diuers things to bee handled.

As firſt here is a motion, a conſultation, or a demaunde, touching the Church of the Gentiles, with a promiſe of great glorie.

Secondly, heere is a compariſon made betweene Salomons Vineyarde, and the Church, &c.

And laſtly, Chriſt doth put her in minde of her dutie towardes him: and ſhe craueth his preſence, and protection in all her neede.

Concerning the firſt of theſe, you know that in the time of Salomon, when this

this Song was made, yea, long before, and after, vntill Christ ascended into Heauen, the Church was shut vp, and bounded among the Iewes.

God suffered the Gentiles to walke in the vanityes of their owne minde manie hundred yeares: but there were prophesies, and there were promises, that the Gentiles should (at the comming of the Blessed-Seede) be receyued to mercie, and bee made one bodie, with the Faithfull of the Iewes. As it is written, *I haue made thee a light of the Gentiles, and the Saluation to the endes of the earth.* Also, *Aske of me, and I will giue thee the Heathen for thine inheritaunce, and the vttermoste partes of the Earth for thy possession.* The Faithfull, in the time of the Lawe vnderstanding this, are carefull of them.

For this is the nature of Faith, to breede a loue in the hearts of the godly towardes those which belong vnto God, whome they neuer saw: yea, that haue bin long before them, or that shall bee long after them. This loue bringeth forth praier for them, & desire to procure or further their saluation. Fróhence it is that the *bride* doth

motion the matter vnto her Spouſe, *We haue a little ſiſter*, ſayeth ſhee, *and ſhe hath no breaſts: What ſhall wee doe for our ſiſter in the day that ſhee ſhall bee ſpoken for?*

Firſt, wee are to obſerue, that this ſpeech is framed according to the maner here in the world. A young little Damſell is not to be married vntill ſhee growe vp in yeares: Shee is not for marriage, vntill ſhe haue breaſts to nouriſh the children that ſhe ſhall bring foorth. Moreouer when ſhee doth come to the ripenes of yeeres to be beſtowed in marriage, her friends doe ſet her forth, and ſpeake for her. So here ſhee ſayeth, wee haue a little ſiſter, ſhee is not yet growne vp, her time is not yet come to be betrothed. She hath as yet no breaſts, ſhee hath not to nouriſh vp children,

Her time will come that ſhee is to be commended and ſpoken for, what ſhal wee then doe for her? Let vs conſider euery point more particularly. At that time there was no Church of the Gentiles, and yet ſhee ſayeth, wee haue a ſiſter. How could this be ſpoken, ſhe was

not

not yet in being? Here wee muſt obſerue, that the decrees and promiſes of God for things to come are ſo certaine, & infallible that faith apprehendeth them, & ſpeaketh of them before they be, euen as if they were. And ſo ſhee ſayth, wee haue a little ſiſter.

It hath beene noted before, that according to the manner of the Hebrewes, the whole is called the mother, and the parts are called ſiſters: That point is cleare enough: but why then doth ſhee not ſay, I haue a little ſiſter, but wee haue a little ſiſter? Is the Church of the Gentiles, not onely ſiſter to the Church of the Iewes, but alſo the ſiſter of Chriſt. Yea, ſhee is the ſiſter of Chriſt alſo. For that you ſee through this ſong, that the Lord calleth the church his ſiſter.

Heere is the myſtery of his Incarnation: for hee hath taken vpon him our nature, hee is become the firſt begotten among many brethren: *Wee are* (as the Apoſtle ſayeth) *fleſh of his fleſh, and bones of his bones*, Epheſ. 5. So that hee loueth his Church as a Spouſe, and as a deere ſiſter: yea the Church of the Gentiles is

preci-

precious vnto him, euen as the Church of the Iewes.

Heere may arise another Question, how the Church of the Iewes could call the church of the Gentiles a little sister, seeing the Churches of the Gentiles in greatnes and in number of true children, haue farre exceeded the church of the Iewes.

The Iewes were but one little Nation: many great nations there were of the Gentiles; so that euery way the church of the Gentiles hath in greatnesse exceeded the church of the Iewes. How doth she then call her a little Sister, when shee is greater then herselfe?

I answer, that shee dooth not respect the number of the Faithfull, which the churches of the Gentiles should bring foorth, but the time: becausse the time was not yet come that the Gentiles should be called, and betrothed vnto Christ: she was as yet, as a little virgine, vnder age to be betrothed.

Then for the next point, there was no spirituall nourishment for Children that should be brought vp to God among the Gentiles: there were not the holy Oracles

of

of God, there was not *the ſincere milke of the Word.* There were wiſe men of this world, great Phyloſophers and ſubtill diſputers: but no true doctrine, to conuert the ſoule to God, or to nouriſh it vp being conuerted. There was worſhip of diuels, and all manner of ſuperſtition. There was great boaſting of diuine knowledge, and high wiſedome: but the Bryde knoweth that in reſpect of the true wiſedome, it was nothing but fooliſhnes. And that is the cauſe why ſhe ſaith, her little ſiſter hath *no breſts.*

Then touching the care that ſhe hath for this her little ſiſter, thus ſhee ſayth: *What ſhall wee doe for our ſiſter, in the day that ſhe ſhall be ſpoken for?* The ſumme of her ſpeech is to know what preferment, what honor, glorie, and dignity ſhall be layd vppon the church of the Gentiles, at the time when they ſhould be called, and made one bodie with the Iewes.

But why dooth ſhee not ſay to Chriſt, What wilt thou doo for our Siſter? ſeeing all the benefites and all the glorie beſtowed vppon the Church doo flowe from him alone? Is there any one Bleſſing that commeth vppon the Church, where

whereof the Lord Ieſus alone is not the Author: How then ſayeth ſhe, *What ſhal wee doe for our ſiſter, &c.*

Doth ſhee together with Chriſt beſtow the graces and heauenly bleſſinges. This is eaſily anſwered. Chriſt Ieſus alone is the fountaine, and the author of all heauenly bleſſings vpon the Church, and yet the auncient church of the Iewes ioineth her ſelfe with him in calling, and decking the church of the Gentiles, becauſe by her miniſtery the Goſpell was to be preached vnto them. Chriſt Ieſus then as the author, beſtoweth the heauenly treaſures vpon the Gentiles, & the church of the Iewes by her miniſtery, is an inſtrument to carry, and to ſpread the ſame among the Gentiles.

This wee ſee was fulfilled, for the holy Apoſtles and Euangeliſts which preached the Goſpell to the Gentiles, were of the Iewes. Well then ſhee ſayeth to her Spouſe: *What ſhall we doe for our Siſter, when wee ſhall bee ſpoken for.* Here by the way wee may note, that ſeing the church of the Iewes had this care and loue to her little ſiſter the church of the Gentiles, and

ſeeing

seeing that by her ministery, and by the ministerie of her children, the holy Apostles and others, the Gospell was spreade among the Nations, It is our part now to bee as louing and as carefull, and as earnest in her behalfe with the Lord, as shee was for vs: for it doth seeme by the doctrine of Saint *Paul*, Rom. 11. that there shall be againe a church of the Iewes. We ought then to haue the like pitty vppon her, that she had on vs, when we were out.

Now followeth the answere of Christ touching this their little sister, what shold bee done for her; If shee be a wall (sayth hee) we will build vpon her a siluer palace if shee bee a dore, wee will keepe her in with bordes of Cedar. Wee see plainely that Christ did allow of this manner of speech in his Spouse, when she sayd, *What shal we do for our sister:* for he speaketh after the same manner, saying, If shee be a wal we will build vpon her a siluer palace, &c He doth not exclude his Spouse from this worke, for by her Ministery it was wrought, as we noted before.

And now touching the summe of the matter, it is this, that shee shall be builte

to

to bee the City of God, and a precious pallace for the king of glory to dwell in: For by a wall and a doore, or gate, is meant a City, thoſe two parts beeing put for the whole, and as I ſayde, the ſiluer palace to be built vpon the ſame, is the pallace or temple of the moſt high God, As you know the Church is called the temple of God, and the City of God. This is the higheſt glory and dignity that can come to mortall men: This matter is handled more at large, Reuel. 21: and there you may reade touching the walles and gates of this City, and touching the glory thereof. Thus you may ſee the meaning of this,' if ſhee bee a wall, and if ſhee bee a gate, there ſhall bee the ſiluer pallace, and the bordes of Cedar.

And now ſee what the Bride ſayeth to this, *I am a Wall, and my breaſts are as towers, then was I as ſhee that findeth peace in his eyes.* The Church of the Iewes was at that time when this ſong was written a wall, or indeed a Citie, euen the citie of the great King, & breſts ſhe had to nouriſh vp her children, and *God* dwelled in her as in his pallace: but ſhee ſpeaketh here

here rather vppon this promiſe of Chriſt to the gentiles, when that is accompliſhed, then is ſhe indeed a goodly Citie, then her breaſts become as towers: for then doth the doctrine of Chriſt abound in her. It may ſeeme to make againſt this ſenſe, that ſhee ſpeaketh in the time paſt, and not in the time to come, then was I and not then ſhall I be as one that findeth fauour in his eyes. This may be anſwered two wayes, the one, that the Hebrews do vſe the preterperfect tenſe, ſometimes for the future. Or thus, that in the certainety of faith, ſhe ſpeaketh of that which was to come, as if it had beene come.

Here then are three things which the bride gloryeth in touching her happie eſtate at the comming in of her little ſiſter, the church of the gentiles.

The firſt is, that ſhee is then a Wall, euen a goodly glorious citie indeed, and the ſiluer pallace built vpon her. For although ſhee were the citie of *God* before, yet now farre more large by the multitude and glory of the gentiles comming in, & being made one body with her *Chriſt Ieſus*. But how is it that Chriſt ſaying. *If*

ſhee

ſhee bee a Wall, ſpeaking of her little ſiſter, ſhee maketh not anſwere, ſhee is a wall, but *I am a wall*: The reaſon of this is euident, that although as ſeuerall parties they bee called ſiſters, yet ioyned in one, they bee but one Church. Her little ſiſter ioyned vnto her, is become her ſelfe, for in that reſpect ſhee ſaith, I am a wall: I am that glorious cittie of God, in mee is that ſiluer palace, the palace of the great King

The ſecond thing is: That *her Breaſtes are as Towers*. Her little ſiſter ſhe ſayde had no breaſts: but now the doctrine is ſo plenteous, that her breſts be euen as towers, There is milke to nouriſh great multitudes of children, for when the word of the Lord went foorth from Ieruſalem, and the Law out of Sion, vnto the mighty Nations, according as the Prophets foretold it ſhould come to paſſe, the Lord gaue great gifts of his Spirite, and great light of knowledge in the heauenly miſteries and very great multitudes were turned to the Lord. In the time of the Law, the Prophets did vtter the doctrine of God, and ſpeak of Chriſt, but not ſo clearely as the Apoſtles did.

Now

Now her breaſtes became as Towers. And then the third thing followeth, that ſhee ſaith: I was then, as ſhee that findeth fauour (or as the word is) peace in his eyes. Not onely her glorie is now greater by ſo large an addition of the Gentiles, but alſo the time now draweth neere of the marriage. For, the Lord alwayes fore-told that it ſhould be in the laſt daies, that the Gentiles ſhould be ioyned vnto his people.

True it is, that at this time, euen when the holie Apoſtles were ſent foorth with this Commiſſion, *Goe teach all Nations, &c.* Math. 28. The Church was wonderfull glorious in the Lords eyes, and the time commeth on very faſt, that ſhee ſhall enioy the full happines for euer.

Here wee muſt conſider that the Lord dealing ſo gratiouſly with vs, to be borne, and to liue in the time of the Goſpell, in the time of this great Light: in the time when the breaſtes of the Church are as towers, that there is much to bee required at our hands. If we ſet light by the heauenly doctrine, if we remaine now in ignorance and blindnes, if wee be now vnthankfull to the Lord, how wretched and how miſerable is our eſtate? What haue

wee to excuse our selues?

Now we come vnto the second thing, which is the comparison betweene *Salomons* vine-yard and the Church. The Church is called a vine, and a vine-yarde, and so the comparison is made here betweene her and another vine-yard. As King *Salomon* did excell in glorie, so all things that hee had, did in their kinde excell. His vine-yard in *Baal-Hamon*, was a great and a goodly vine-yard, and such as he made speciall account of, and receiued great commoditie by it. But yet Christ sayeth, it was not like his vine-yard. The differences are noted: The first is, that *Salomon* let out his Vine-yard vnto keepers: the second, that he receyued but part of the fruits, and the keepers another parte for their paynes. But Christ keepeth his Vine-yarde himselfe, and receyueth not a parte, but the whole fruit alone to himselfe. This is the summe. But let vs consider it more particularly by the words: First hee sayth, *Salomon* hath a Vine, as I said before, the person is named: that we may know thereby the excellencie of it. Secondly, he noteth the place, when he sayeth, in *Baal-Hamon*: but not the proper name of any one place, but as if

he

hee should say, in a most fruitfull soyle or place: for, *Baal* signifieth a Lord, and *Hamon* a multitude: So that it is as much to say, in a place so plenteous for Vines, that it bringeth forth a multitude of vines. The place is much for a Vine, and therefore when the Lord will shew by the Prophet, that he did all things to his Vineyard, to make it bring foorth good fruite, hee doth beginne with the place: for the Prophet sayth, *My well-beloued hath a Vine, Bekeren ben shamen*: Esay, 5. Which is as much to say, word for word, in an horne, the sonne of fatnes. The horne is the corner of an hill: the other is, that it is very fat. Then next, he sayeth, that Salomon let forth his vineyard vnto keepers. For although K. Salomon made great account of his Vine-yarde, yet he did not dwell in it, and keepe it himselfe. He was not so much delighted with it, as alwayes to haue it in his presence, and neuer out of his sight. For, he let it out to keepers. These keepers and dressers of the vineyard must haue their hire, and therfore it is sayd, that they bring euery one a thousand pieces or sickles of silver, and part they reserue vnto themselues, as he sayth, two hundred pieces.

Our Engliſh tranſlation ſayth, two thouſand to the keepers, but I ſuppoſe the fault did growe by the Printers, ſetting two thouſand, for two hundreth, and not by the Tranſlatours, ſeeing there is not any thing in the wordes, which might leade them to ſay two thouſand.

Now come to the reddition: *But my Vine-yarde which is mine* (ſayeth the Lord) *is before mee.* Here is the diſſimilitude, the vineyarde of Chriſt, euen his Church, his deare Spouſe, which appertaineth onely to him, is before him, or alwayes in his preſence, he is ſo delighted therwith, he taketh ſuch comfort and ſolace therein, and is ſo deare and precious vnto him, that he is alwayes preſent with it, and neuer abſent from it one minute, he watcheth and keepeth it himſelfe, and dwelleth in it.

Salomon let forth his vnto keepers, but Chriſt doth not let foorth his. And as his Eye is alwayes vppon it, to keepe it, ſo hee hath the whole Fruites to himſelfe: *Salomon* had his parte, and the keepers theirs, but not ſo in this Vine: for, the whole commeth to Chriſt. I neede not ſtand here to ſhewe in many wordes, how precious, and how deare this Vine is vnto

the

the Lord, that he keepeth it himſelfe, and how faithfull the Church is, which doth bring forth her fruits to none but him. Alſo I will not ſtay vpon this, to ſhew that Chriſt being alwaies preſent with his Church, and not letting it forth vnto keepers, how wicked and blaſphemous that doctrine of the Romiſh Church is, that affirmeth the Pope to be Chriſts Vicar: as if Chriſt were abſent and had let forth this vineyard vnto him to keepe. Heereupon he challengeth that he is put in truſt to doe what he will. Chriſt ſaieth heere that his vine is before him, his eye is neuer off from it, he keepeth it himſelfe, it is not let foorth to keepers, as if he were abſent like king Salomon from his vine. *Behold* (ſayth he) *I am with you vnto the end of the world.* Mat. 28. And he appeareth to Saint Iohn in the middeſt of the ſeauen golden candleſtickes which are the ſeauen Churches. Reuel. 1. You may eaſily then diſcerne what a monſter the Pope is, which will needs be his Vicar, which is, one in his ſteade to do that which he himſelfe ſhould doe if he were preſent. Heere is Antichriſt that is, one that taketh vpon him to be in Chriſts ſteade, and yet is an aduerſarie.

For vnder pretence of doing the duty of an head, he draweth all from Christ to receiue his lawes, and to put their truſt in him. Let this monſter paſſe with his ſeduced company, which are not the ſpouſe of Christ, but his owne ſpouſe. It may heere be demanded, doth not Christ let forth his vineyard to dreſſers? Did not Paul plant and Apollo water? doe not all faithfull paſtors and teachers ſhewe their duty in keeping this vine? I aunſwere, it is moſt certaine that the Prophets, the Apoſtles and all holy teachers may after a ſort be called keepers and dreſſers of this Vine: but yet no further, but as inſtruments whom Christ vſeth: for hee is preſent with them, he worketh by them, and therefore hee holdeth the ſeauen ſtars in his right hand, which are the Angels of the ſeauen Churches, *Reuel.* 1. The keepers of Salomons vine doe keepe it and dreſſe it in his abſence: but the keepers of Chriſts vine can doe nothing, vnleſſe he be with them and worke by them. As I ſaid before, they be but inſtruments, hee vſeth them, he is alway preſent, and doth worke by them. Alſo it may for the other part be ſaid; ſhall not the faithfull teachers receiue

ceiue reward for their labours. Yes there be promiſes of great reward vnto all that doe performe their dutie in that office. Is not that reward ſome part of the fruite which the vine bringeth forth? No, this reward is promiſed and giuen by the Lord, it commeth not by men. And thus much for this matter.

Now to the laſt thing of all in the concluſion, which is in two parts: whereof the former is the voice of the Bridegrome calling vpon his ſpouſe to performe her dutie, and the latter is the ſpeech of the Bride, crauing his preſence and ſpeedy ayde in all her neede. His words are theſe: *O thou that dwelleſt in the garden, thy companions hearken to thy voice, make me to heare it.* Heere is (as I ſaide) the duty of the Bride inioyned, yea the great and ſpeciall dutie: but it is darke to be vnderſtoode, becauſe our Engliſh tranſlation hath ſomewhat ſwarued in the laſt word of the ſentence: for it ſaith, *make me to heare it*, adding this particle (*it*) which is not in the Hebrew. The word indeede is, *make me heare*, in the moſt vſuall ſenſe, and it doth ſignifie to preach, becauſe they that preach, make thoſe to heare whom they

preach vnto. In this place therefore we may take it thus: preach me: for that is the great office of the Church, to publish Christ. But wee will come to it in order as the words doe stand. *O thou that dwellest in the gardens.* The whole Church is called a garden full of all sweet plants, as we had before in this song. The particular Churches, which are the parts of the whole, be called gardens. Now, because the vniuersall Church vpon earth, euen the spouse, is spread ouer all, she is said to dwell in the gardens, that is in all the particular assemblies which know and worship God aright, through the world: Her care is ouer all, they be all her children, and her plants, and so she is said to dwell in the gardens.

The next clause is, *The companions hearkening to the voice, &c.* Who be these companions, which hearken to the voice of the Church, hee willeth her to preach him vnto them? They be all men, men of all nations and people, which with reuerence doe heare the heauenly Oracles, which the Church doth publish and set foorth. Christ Iesus in the Gospell giueth this precept, *Giue not holy things to dogges,*

neither

neither caſt pearles before ſwine. Thoſe dogges and ſwine are ſuch people, as the one ſort of them neglect and deſpiſe the heauenly doctrine, and doe as it were tread it vnder their feete, the other doe hate and perſecute both it, and thoſe that bring it. From ſuch dogges and ſwine, the bridegrome doth heere diſtinguiſh the reuerent hearers of the voice of the Church, calling them fellowes or companions. Heere may you obſerue by the greatneſſe of that dignity which Chriſt giueth vnto them, how acceptable a thing it is before God, to giue eare to the doctrine of God publiſhed by his miniſters. They be receiued into the fellowſhip of Chriſt & his Saints. What higher dignitie, then to be a companion in this ſocietie? How may this encourage vs to giue euen all diligence to hearken to the doctrine of God, vttered by the Church? Then that he willeth his ſpouſe to make theſe companions that hearken to her voice, to heare of him: it is as much as to ſay, preach me vnto them. The Lord ſaid to Peter, *Simon Ioanna loueſt thou mee, more then theſe?* And ſo againe, and the third time.

And

And Peter answering, *Thou knowest Lord that I loue thee*: he addeth: *Feed my sheepe, feede my lambes, feede my sheepe.* As if hee should say, this is the great fruit of thy loue which I require, preach me to my chosen. So the Church professing that great abundant loue of hers, a little before in this Chapter, Christ requireth that she will shew it in preaching him vnto his redeemed. As if he should say, of all loue, publish and preach me, lay open the treasures of life and saluation that are in mee, vnto those that hearken. Herein then lyeth the performance of the great duty of the Church, and the singular declaration of her loue to Christ, that she preach him. To glorifie Christ, by opening to the world what he is, what treasures bee in him, is a great matter. And because the life of his sheepe doth depend vpon the preaching of him, hee requireth it of his spouse as a thing most acceptable vnto him. Let all the true Ministers of the Gospel looke vpon this, how glorious and how acceptable a worke it is, to preach Christ crucified. How happy are they then whom God hath called to that of-

fice,

flee, so they doe faithfully discharge their dutie?

And now wee will come to the last verse of all in this song, which is the speech of the bride, containing a vehement prayer: for as she beganne this song, and with prayer, so doth she end it, and with prayer. For seeing we haue no good thing of our selues, but all good things come downe from aboue, the beginning and the end of our song must be with prayer. What other way haue wee to pull downe graces, and heauenly blessings vpon vs, but by this, *Aske and yee shall haue, seeke and yee shall find, knocke and it shall be opened vnto you.* Matth. 7. Our whole spirituall life, our happines and our protection dependeth vpon Christ: It standeth vs in hand then to call continually vnto him, as the spouse doth heere. Touching the words of her prayer, our translation saith, *Flie away my welbeloued, and be like to the Roe or young Hart.* This is not well translated: for doth the Church desire the spouse to depart speedily from her? She requesteth him to come to her speedily. For the word indeede is: *Flie my welbeloued, and*

be

be like to the Roe or young Hart: that is come ſpeedily vnto mee. As if ſhee ſhould ſay, O my welbeloued, thou doeſt enioyne me to preach thee, and to lay open the rich treaſures and glory of thy grace. I am very willing and ready to performe this dutie, but I ſhall thereby procure mighty enemies: for the Prince of darkneſſe will raiſe vp all the bloody tyrants that hee can againſt mee: I am feeble and weake of my ſelfe, and not meete to encounter with them. Be not abſent therefore, leaue me not to their deſires, but come ſpeedily for my ſuccour and defence, in all my troubles: for then ſhall I be ſure to preuaile. Whether ſhe call the heauens the mountaines of ſpices, or whether we take it for the mountaine of the Lord heere vpon earth, I take it not much materiall. The ſumme is (as I ſaid) that ſhe craueth his ſwift comming from heauen like a Roe, and his ſpeedy aide and ſuccour, to ſupport, to ſtrengthen and to comfort her in all her troubles and afflictions. The Lord giue vnto vs the true vnderſtanding of this holy ſong, and a liuely feeling of the loue of Chriſt, that we

we may delight in him, and loue him a-
gaine, that we may bring forth the ſweete
fruits heere mentioned, and be of his plea-
ſant plants, that when this vaine life
is ended, we may raigne with
him for euermore in
in the heauens.
Amen.

FINIS.

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we may delight in him, and love him a-
gaine, that we thay bring forth the sweete
fruits heere mentioned, and be of his plea-
sant plants, that when this vaine life
is ended, we may raigne with
him for euermore in
in the heauens.
Amen.

FINIS.

The Father hath given His Son to be
ye Saviour of ye World, & with Him, or
rather in Him all good things. The Son
hath wrought all righteousness, & finished
all things which concern our Redemption.
And the Holy Ghost maketh us partakers
of ye same. p. 57 —

— Love is His Banner ovr ym — They have
ye full assurance of Faith, that He
suffered Death to make Satisfaction
for their Sins, that in Him they are
Justified, & Sanctified, & shall be Glo=
rified. see Rom. 8, 16.
p. 89

— only acceptable Service wch proceeds of
Love & Faith — not frō Servile fear, or for
some sinister respects. See 89
& 90.
The Ld G is delighted only with that wch
proceedeth frō a frank heart wch
sincerely loveth Him. See p. 90.
— she had felt the Banner of His Love spread
ovr her — 91.

— Her heart so ravished with Love towds Him,
yt she is Love-sick, & ready to swoon therewith
— a marvellous passion of Love — 93
— vide-seek after Xst — as chief Treasure,
& heart's solace — 92

The true Church indeed consisteth of many several flocks, if we respect ye diversity of times & places: but if we respect the unity of their faith, & how they be made one Mistical body of CHRIST they be all but one flock. p. 48.

There is but one true faith, one holy Religion, & Worship of God, one pure Doctrine, one Spiritual food or pasture for all that come to life. Although it hath not been delivered at all times alike, or under one forme &c see p. 50.

We look who were the Shepherds under CHRIST in auncient time, even ye Prophets & the Apostles, we look unto their tents, & by them we seek for pasture. We look only unto the written word which is delivered unto us from God by them: — Wt a glo: there is in ye Simple & Chast, & beautif: Eye of Faith: as also in those graces & Spirit: Ornam: wch are ye fruits thereof, wch are meant by a Chain of her neck. — enflamed to seek encrease of — wherein many pla: of ye Ho: Script: wch

Comend Faith. 201. ——— 231 - The true & lively Faith, & the Spirit of Sanctification are never utterly extinguished. The Work of the New byrth can never be quite put out: a most Singlar Comfort.

232. - Let ym go wch wth ye papists wd uphold & maintain that wicked opin: yt ye true justifying Faith, & Sanctifying Spirit, may be had & utterly lost.

Faith. it's glorious beauty - excell^t in ye Eyes of The L^d - ye more stedfastly we trust in The L^d, ye more acceptable it is unto Him, ye more we do glorifie Him. (vid. mat. 15. Lu. 7.) p. 280.

— apprehend ye Love & Affec: of X^ST - feel yt G^d hath Loved him - speak & do good yngs from a frank & free heart - spring frō Love - nt frō Servile fear - or some Sinister respect - heart delight in wt ye hands perform - cheerful & willing - The L^d will bestow His Rich Graces & Gifts upō His Church - forn^d & ready to receive ym

— from Earthly Things — Set ye af-
:tions on ynges ab: — Love & desire Hea-
-vent Things — mind & affec: car-
-ried out of ye wld — meditate &
delight in Heavly ynges — vide 320
321, 322. ye good effect of afflic=
tions — by wldly Ease & prosper:
ye gifts of ye Spir: lye bur: grow:
as it wer rusty — wn ye fiery trial
comet, wn they be cast as Gold in
ye furnace, ye dross is burned out,
they shine bright, they be raised up
& quickned.

— G hath no need of any creatures to set
forth His Glo: &c — but it is His Holy will
yt — acceptab: & delights: to Hm ~~ther~~
vide 332.

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acknowledge unfeignedly yt they have
been enabled & made fit thereunto by
His Grace, & so yr glorying is not in
ymselves but in the Ld. 334.

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